Thomas W. Green Book

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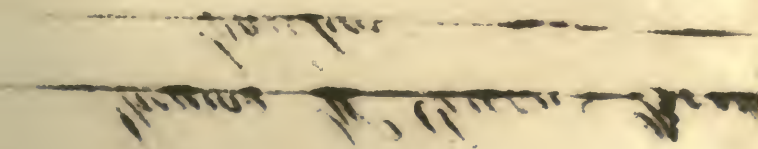

Money-Maker.

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THE

MONEY-MAKER,

AND

OTHER TALES.

BY

JANE C. CAMPBELL.

Look, then, into thy heart, and write!
Yes, into life's deep stream! LONGFELLOW.

Society, perhaps, more than any other element of life, gives scope to the extremes of fact and fiction, of caprice and devotion, of frankness and feigning. On the one hand it is a most complete masquerade, and on the other a profound reality.
TUCKERMAN.

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DEDICATORY.

To thee, beloved, in thy distant home,
And the dear dwellers in thy household shrine,
Whose love, and life, are closely bound with thine,
Speeds forth my heart, a pilgrim to old Rome.

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The Money-Maker.

CHAPTER I.

AS, while a cold, dark current is fretting underneath, the surface of a stream may be bright and placid, glassing the tranquil beauty of a summer heaven, and mirroring the glory of the silent stars; even so while the smile is on the lip, and the light word on the tongue, there may be gloom within the heart, and a brooding tempest in the soul—for life, too, has its under-current of thought, feeling, suffering, which are seldom, if ever, known.

We are not disposed to dwell on the dark side of life's picture, and to find naught but sadness and sorrow on the earth; on the contrary, we gladly drink in every gleam of sunshine with which God brightens our daily path, and hopefully look to see a rainbow shining from every cloud. So, too, though we see many repeatedly giving way to temptation, until the power of resistance is gone, yet have we not lost our faith in human nature, for man, though "far gone from original righteousness," still retains the impress of his origin.

"Trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

But to our story.

"Did not Mrs. Mervin look superbly beautiful to-night? As she passed me in her robe of black-velvet, studded with brilliants, with the diamond circlet on her brow, I could not help repeating—

> 'I heard the trailing garments of the Night
> Sweep through her marble halls!
> I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
> From the celestial walls!'"

"For shame, Dudley! it is a desecration of the poet's beautiful imagery to apply it to such a woman."

"Come, come, Herbert, you are too fastidious. Mrs. Mervin is an ambitious, fashionable woman; but tell me, where is the woman who is not ambitious, and who would not if she could, be a leader of the fashion? You expect too much from them. You expect that although surrounded by temptations to luxury in living, and extravagance in dress, they will wear the garb of Quakers, and eat the bread of anchorites. Recollect, though you are a descendant of the Knickerbockers, you are not living in the primitive days of the veritable Diedrich. So just take the sex as you find them. A pretty woman is always a pleasant plaything, a little silly, perhaps—but that is nothing. She can waltz as well, and sing as well, and talk as well, as any other puppet; and this is all that's wanting to while away an idle hour."

"Have you forgotten that you are a brother, Dudley? Have you forgotten Alice?"

Dudley's cheek glowed with honest pride at the mention of his sister's name, for he thought what fond bachelor brothers will sometimes think, that in the wide world could not be found another woman like his sister.

"I was but jesting with you, Herbert. You know that I yield to none in my high appreciation of the noble and truthful in female character; and I regret that so few woman have firmness sufficient to enable them to turn from the allurements of the world, and find their happiness in the sanctuary of a quiet home. To own the truth, it can hardly be expected from them. They are educated for show, they are dressed for show, they are paraded for show, and what wonder that so many marry for show! So long as mothers take pains to initiate their daughters into the art and mystery of 'how to get married, and whom to marry,' so long as they teach them that the crowning glory of womanhood is to make a good match, so long will woman be frivolous and heartless, caring more for wealth than worth, and prizing more the money than the man. Now, this is all that Mrs. Mervin has done, and I wonder you are so embittered against her."

"No, this is not all. She is not only ambitious but false-hearted. When she married Mervin, she knew that act would crush to the dust one who had long loved her, one whom she had flattered with the belief that he was beloved. But what to her were wasted affections—for it does not hold true that 'affection never is wasted;' what to her were broken vows, when damask lounges and diamond circlets might be had in exchange?"

"And so the lady has been a jilt! Now, if she had been the jilted, she might have brought an action for breach of promise, and so found a golden cure for the heart-ache, eh, Herbert?"

"I dare say she would have been mercenary enough even for such a despicable transaction. How she ever obtained such an influence over Carlton is unaccountable."

"But you forget that I do not know the story, and cannot enter into the merits of the case. Perhaps, after all, Mrs. Mervin is not so much to blame as you, in your zeal for your friend, suppose her to be."

"Would that it were so. For two years she encouraged Carlton's addresses, and knew that his every hope of happiness was bound up in her. Carlton was not rich, and I had my misgivings that Miss Lumley would not marry him; but he, poor fellow, was infatuated, and would not listen to a doubt. His health had always been delicate, but with a supposed incentive before him, he allowed himself no respite from exertion. 'The reward will be so sweet,' he would say, 'is it not worth toiling for?' He was at last reluctantly compelled to take some relaxation. He left home for a month, and returned to find the woman, for whom he had sacrificed his health, the wife of another! Having had no intimation of the event, he could hardly be made to believe that it was true. Most men would have felt indignant, and looked with contempt on the woman who could so barter away her truth, and in the engrossing pursuits of active life, or in the joys of a new affection, would have forgotten, or at least grown totally indifferent to the past. But Carlton was not one of these. He was shy, sensitive, loving as a gentle woman—and he never recovered from the shock. Too proud to complain, he veiled his grief under an assumed appearance of gaiety, and so well played the masker that even his friends were deceived. But I knew what was passing within, and saw by his very recklessness that life was without value. In less than a year he was dying, and it was during the night-watches by his bed-side, that I learned to despise the woman who had

caused his death. But no good will come of it; no good can come from falsehood and deceit."

"Is this romantic story true, Herbert? A man dying from wounded affection! You know 'men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.' Had it been a woman who thus yielded to morbid sensitiveness, it were not to be wondered at; but a *man*—the thing is too absurd!"

"Speak not so lightly. There are depths in man's soul as well as in woman's, undreamed of, and unfathomed by the outer world."

CHAPTER II.

John Mervin was, by many years, the younger of two brothers, who were early left orphans, with no inheritance save the blessing of their parents, and the oft-repeated exhortation to love one another.

As the boys grew in years, the elder watched over the younger, toiling from sunrise to sunset, that he might be enabled to defray the expenses of John's education at the district school.

Jesse Mervin was one of those unselfish beings who delight in laboring for those they love without exacting aught in return, and so long had he done this for John, that the latter had come to regard as a right what was owing solely to his brother's affection. Now, John was not really hard-hearted, he had a sort of instinctive love for his brother, but he had a far greater love for himself, than which, no-

thing could be more akin to hard-heartedness. He would have repelled the thought that he might forget, or wrong his brother, and it was not without emotion that he parted from Jesse, to go as clerk in a country town. Naturally aspiring, he soon eschewed the counter, left the country, and with his small stock of worldly goods, betook him to seek his fortune in the city. Here he had the "good luck," as he wrote to Jesse, to obtain a subordinate situation in a broker's office; and so well were his employers pleased with his shrewdness and business capacity, that in time he was made their confidential clerk. One step more, into an office of his own—and soon John Mervin was one of the most influential men on 'change.

Some men seem to leap over all obstacles, and, apparently without an effort, place themselves in situations of opulence and trust; while others spend their lives in a vain endeavor to gain a modest competence, and die, leaving their object unattained.

We will not pause here to inquire what opposite causes produce such widely different results, or how it is that some men so suddenly amass large fortunes. Much might be said about energy and perseverance on the one hand, and the want of those qualities on the other; but, generally speaking, the secret lies in what is called "a lucky speculation," for which the shrewd, worldly-minded money-maker is always on the alert; while the more conscientious man of business will not take advantage of either the ignorance or the wants of his fellows. We are not here speaking of wealth acquired by long years of patient devotion to the counter or the desk, but of those sudden turns in the wheel of fortune which place the unmoneyed man of yesterday among the milionaires of to-day.

Round the heart of the successful broker prosperity had wound a golden coil which avarice was daily tightening, and to him the divine precept, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you," was fast becoming a dead letter. Becoming, did we say? it had already become so! If he bought stocks at ruinous prices because the holders were pressed for money and must sell, who could blame him, when he paid the current value? If, at a time when thousands were dying with hunger, he speculated in the misery of his fellows, and filled his coffers with the price of tears and of blood, who could blame him for selling a marketable commodity to the highest bidder? If he foreclosed a poor man's mortgage at the very hour when it was due, leaving him homeless and penniless, with no alternative save starvation or the alms-house, who could blame him, when it was "so nominated in the bond"? And thus he went on, adding thousand to thousand, and forgetting that riches can take unto themselves wings and flee away.

Did John Mervin ever think of his brother? Did he remember the warm-hearted Jesse, to whom he owed that education which had been the foundation of his fortune? He had done so, he had thought of him and remembered him, and had written to him, but it was long ago, years had passed since then, and the coil had been tightened till there was no room left in his heart save for the love of Mammon.

At the age of five-and-forty, John Mervin was still unmarried. Plain in personal appearance, devoid of intellectual culture, and lacking in gentlemanly ease and polish of manner, some over-refined individuals regarded him as a rather unlucky candidate for the favors of Hymen; but

all defects were hidden by a money-laden cloud—and a woman broke her truth to catch the golden shower!

The broker's marriage was but a nine-days wonder, but not so the change in his style of living. No more costly building than Mr. Mervin's reared its handsome front in the avenue chosen by wealth and fashion for their proud display; no more sumptuous furniture than that imported by Mr. Mervin could be found within republican walls; no carriage more elegant in its appointments than Mr. Mervin's, could be pointed out on the fashionable drive; and no wife more superbly dressed than Mr. Mervin's, could be seen among the aristocracy of wealth. It was computed that Mervin lived at the rate of twenty or twenty-five thousand dollars a year. And all this vast outlay was warranted by his income—so thought the world—so, perhaps, thought Mervin himself!

Sunk in the richly-brocaded cushions of a rose-wood *fautueil*, Mrs. Mervin was glancing at some unpaid bills, which the servant had laid on the table. One was for a tapestry carpet in the dining-room, another for a dessert service of Bohemian glass, and a third for an ermined opera cloak. While she was thus engaged, her husband entered the room. She carelessly tossed the papers toward him, and without any other indication that she recognized his presence, turned to the book she had been reading.

Mervin felt the insolence of her manner, and his cheek flushed, as he said: "When must these be paid?" Without raising her eyes from the page, she briefly replied, "Tomorrow."

He ventured to remonstrate; "A new carpet was not wanting in the dining-room; and this cloak, too, why the last one you ordered has been worn but twice."

Now she raised her head, and with a cool, contemptuous look, which seemed to ask, "for what did I marry you?" she said, "I want the money to-morrow, sir."

Not another word was spoken. Mervin thrust the bills into his pocket, ate his dinner in silence, dressed his face in smiles, and accompanied his wife to the opera. The next day the lady was bowed into her carriage by the obsequious shop-keepers, who secretly laughed at the extravagance of their customer.

CHAPTER III.

It is refreshing to turn from the petty strifes and envyings of vulgar souls, the jealous rivalries for the possession of things, beautiful in themselves, but unworthy the all-absorbing pursuit of immortal minds—it is refreshing to turn from the passion for show, the thirst for pleasure, the jostling for place and power, the making haste to be rich, which turn the city into one great Babel; it is refreshing to turn from these to the simple, unambitious homes, the loving hearts and contented minds, which are to be found pursuing the even tenor of their way, in green fields and beside clear waters.

Not but the country has its temptations as well as the city—for sin is everywhere; but the allurements to evil are fewer, the incentives to guilt are not so strong. Nature, in her holy temple, is ever teaching lessons of the wisdom and goodness of God. The sunshine, as it ripens the golden grain, the shower, as it falls upon the parched

earth, the green blade of grass as it springs from the lowly ground, the luscious fruit hanging from the laden bough, and the blue heaven smiling upon all, these daily lead the heart to One who maketh the outgoings of the morning and the evening to praise him.

Spring has been coy and coquetish this year, now laughing from the hedges and luring you with violets, and again scattering the blossoms and frowning you away. But her reign is nearly over; as if to show her wealth of beauty, and make you regret her going, she is showering on every side her treasures with a lavish hand.

Crocus and cowslip, daffodil and daisy, hyacinth and narcissus, how she delights in flinging them abroad! She has brushed her robe against the tulip-chalice, and brightened it with every rainbow dye. She has perfumed the honeysuckle-bells, and sent the tiny humming-bird to quaff the nectar of her breath. Let us follow her footsteps down this narrow lane where the air is scented with hawthorn blossoms, and the tender-foliaged trees are whispering the birds to nestle in their boughs.

Under the low projecting eaves of an old farm-house are seated a man of middle age and his son. Two children are playing on the door-step, and in the little kitchen a young girl is preparing the evening meal. Let us enter. There is no tapestry, no rosewood, no damask, to be seen in the small parlor. The floor is covered with striped, country-made carpet; the straight-backed chairs are uncushioned, and the small windows are half shaded with muslin curtains; but it is scrupulously clean and neat, and flowers and books remove all appearance of poverty from the homely room.

We cannot imagine why some people take such pains to

make their apartments so formal and uninviting, with not a book, not a flower, nothing on which the eye can rest with pleasure. The chairs look as if they had been drilled to stand sentinel-like against the walls, the tops of the marble tables gleam cold and chilling as monumental slabs; and while waiting the appearance of some lady, who is lazily unpapering her curls, we feel half inclined to rise and read the epitaphs upon the tombs.

There is no costly china, no massive plate; but there are grateful hearts, and there is an invoked blessing, as the brother of John Mervin sits down with his family at the frugal board.

Jesse Mervin had but once seen his brother since the day when, half blinded with tears, he had looked after him while leaving home. Then he had gone to deposit with the man of easily-acquired wealth, his own hard earnings, that they might be invested in some secure manner, and reserved either as a provision for his old age, or held in trust for his children, if he were gone. He had told John of the great sorrow which had befallen him, how he had lost the partner who for many years had been to him as another self. He dwelt on her virtues, her judicious affection as a mother, her meek and loving deportment as a wife, and he wept as he spoke of his children, and of the delicate infant left without maternal care. Jesse's head, while speaking, was bent upon his hands, and when he looked up for an answering glance of sympathy from his brother, when he listened to hear one kind, consoling word, John's cold gray eye was fastened on the balance-sheet of an account, and his thin lips were fixed in rigid silence. Jesse's heart grew cold within him, he felt as if under the roof of a stranger, and rose to go. Did he see

a relaxing of the rich man's chilling indifference that he lingered on the threshold, and longed to press him to his heart? It was a false hope. A formal shake of the hand, a cold good-by—and this was all! and brother parted from brother, not knowing whether they should look on each other again.

The long deposited money was now the subject of conversation between Jesse Mervin and his children. For the last two or three years his affairs had been far from prosperous. The failure of crops, and the loss of some of his best cattle, had greatly decreased his means; indeed, he found himself so straitened, that it was necessary to use part of the sum which had been placed in the hands of his brother, to whom he had already written on the subject.

"If we do not soon get a letter, father, I think it will be better for me to go to New York. I will bring the money more safely than it could be remitted; and I should like to see this rich uncle of mine—who knows but he might take a fancy to me, and help to make my fortune."

Although Jesse Mervin had been deeply wounded by the conduct of his brother, yet he never mentioned him unkindly, and wished his children to regard their uncle with respect. He was, therefore, averse to his son's proposed visit, for he knew the haughty spirit of the nephew, bound by no tie save that of consanguinity, would not brook the cold looks and repulsive manner which had been meekly borne by the brother, softened as he was by sorrow, and still remembering the loving intercourse of early years.

"It will be well to wait, my son, until we hear from your uncle; and as I cannot this year afford to hire help, it will be impossible for me to spare you before fall."

"Oh don't think of going, Archie," said his sister, who placed less value on money than on the companionship of her brother, "we could never do without you. And what if, after you had set out on your journey, a letter should arrive from my uncle?"

"There is little fear of that, Lucy. Men who, like my uncle, have thousands passing through their hands daily, seldom think of the small amounts that are deposited with them. Sometimes when a stray bill on the bank for which he some years ago obtained a charter, finds its way out here, I think a few hundreds might be directed to us, and I feel as if I ought to go at once and demand them. Would it not be better for me to do so, father?"

"I have already said that I cannot well do without you, my son. But if we are spared until next fall, you may go, provided we do not in the meantime receive a remittance from your uncle."

Although Archie longed to explore the El Dorado which he supposed was to be found in New York, somewhere in the vicinity of Wall street, yet having been brought up in dutiful submission to parental authority, he quietly yielded to his father's wishes.

Summer came and went without bringing the long looked for letter. A heavy sickness had prostrated Archie's strength, and in his anxiety for his boy, Jesse Mervin had neglected the culture of his land. Autumn found them bearing with many privations, and their only hope for the coming winter was in obtaining some of the money in the hands of John Mervin. With Archie's illness came despondency and gloom in the heart of his father, and even Archie himself lost all buoyancy of spirit.

How much sooner does man sink under the burden of

harassing cares, than woman. The petty trials of domestic life which she daily endures without complaint, would irritate and disgust him. The sickness which will make a man fretful as a spoiled child, a woman patiently bears without a murmur. It is at times like these, when woman soothes the chafed spirit, and lightens man's daily cares, when in sickness she watches his every look, and ministers to him with an unwearying love, it is at times like these, and in the doing such holy and gentle deeds, that woman performs her true mission.

"Happy—happier far than thou,
With the laurel on thy brow,
She that makes the humblest hearth
Lovely but to one on earth."

But for the firmness, hopefulness, and ever-watchful solicitude of Lucy Mervin, her father would have sunk beneath the burden of his grief. To Lucy's patient, devoted attentions, under Providence, did her brother owe his life. One would scarcely believe that a young female of slight form, and delicate constitution, could endure so much mental anxiety and bodily fatigue.

But Lucy never allowed duties to remain unfulfilled, no matter how wearisome or distasteful they might be; and now when her whole heart was engaged in the work, what wonder if she accomplished seeming impossibilities? Her brother never missed her from his side. Whenever he awoke out of sleep, there stood his watchful sister ready to administer to his wants. Her father wondered if she ever slept, and feared lest her health should give way; but he was always answered by a bright smile and an assurance that she could do more if necessary.

And yet Lucy had her moments of weariness and depression. They came in the still and solemn night, when all but herself were wrapped in slumber. Then came the thought of her father's increasing infirmities, of the helplessness of the little ones, of her brother's sickness, and perhaps—his death! Then came the blinding tears, and the stifled sobs, the heart-ache and the grief. But the frail girl knew that the "Lord loveth whom he chasteneth;" she had learned in all her troubles to call upon Him, and in the lonely watches of the night she drew nigh to Him in prayer, and arose from those holy communings with renewed trust and strength.

CHAPTER IV.

Between Mrs. Mervin and another leader of a fashionable coterie, had sprung up a ridiculous rivalry, each trying to outdo the other in the brilliancy of her entertainments and the costliness of her attire.

It was because Mrs. Latimer had worn a cloak something like hers, that Mrs. Mervin purchased one of an entirely different pattern; because Mrs. Latimer's dining-room was carpeted with Brussels, Mrs. Mervin had hers removed, and tapestry substituted in its stead; because Mrs. Latimer's dessert-service was of china, Mrs. Mervin would have hers of ruby-colored and gold Bohemian glass. Mrs. Latimer has worn a beautiful evening-dress, and Mrs. Mervin hastens to purchase one far more beautiful.

"Three hundred, I think you said for this?"

"Yes, madam, it is the richest lace dress we have in the store. Here is one at two hundred, a beautiful article certainly, but not to be compared to the other. Mrs. Latimer took one like this last week, she thought three hundred too much; but there is not another like that you are looking at in the city. Just look at these flowers how exquisitely they are wrought! worn over a robe of pale rose-color this dress would be perfection itself."

"Is this the only one of the kind that you have?"

"The only one, for we do not often import them. Let me put it over this pink *poult-de-soie*—could anything be more charming? I was saying to Mr. Brown, my partner, that this dress would exactly suit the fine taste of Mrs. Mervin, and if you had not called here to-day, I should have sent it for you to look at."

"You may put it up for me."

"Anything else this morning, madam?—laces?—embroideries?—we have received some beautiful capes by the last arrival, which we will sell for one half less than they could be purchased for last fall. Here is an article worth twenty dollars, and we offer it at twelve; it is a great sacrifice, but several large manufacturing houses in Paris are in want of funds, and write us that we may have goods at our own prices."

A few laces, a few embroideries, rose-colored silk for the robe, a couple of dresses which she *might* want, a new opera-hood, a dozen pair of gloves were selected, and Mrs. Mervin left a debt of four hundred dollars, lacking fifty cents, to be added to her account. Six hundred dollars, minus the aforesaid fifty cents, had been spent for dress in one week. "Six hundred dollars!" exclaims some painstaking, thrifty housewife, "six hundred dollars! impossi-

ble! Why that is all we have to live on during a whole year!" That may be, my good dame; there are many, let me tell you, who live on less, and thankfully too. But you forget that Mrs. Mervin is a money-maker's wife! A leader in the world of fashion!

Saratoga had murmured *sotto voce* of the airs of Mrs. Mervin. Newport had spoken loudly of the exclusiveness of Mrs. Mervin, and she had returned from both with greater ideas of her own importance, and a determination to make her winter reunions the most brilliant of the season. Her husband, if he sometimes had the wish, had not the power to oppose her, and king though he might be in the realm of notes and discounts, at home he was a slave.

"On what day does Mrs. Mervin receive calls?" said pretty Mrs. Brunton, in one of her prettiest lisps, as she trifled with the *bijouterie* in Mrs. Latimer's boudoir.

"I do not know, my dear," answered the stately Mrs. Latimer, with a look of ineffable disdain. "You are aware, I suppose, that though neighbors, Mrs. Mervin and myself are not on visiting terms."

"*Ciel!* how stupid I am, I knew it to be sure, but ha forgotten all about it But tell me, *chere amie*, how th happens? Mrs. Mervin's style and costume are faultless *n'est ce pas?*"

"They are well enough—but her manner is wanting i the repose of a high-bred woman."

"Do you think so? Danforth told me, on seeing Mrs. Mervin after his return from abroad, that she would grace the polished circles of Europe."

"He must have been jesting. Danforth, who belongs to one of our oldest families, could not have said this in earnest, of a purse-proud *parvenue?*"

Mrs. Brunton winced, for her own importance was owing to her husband's wealth; but taking no notice of the unlady-like sneer, she continued speaking of Mrs. Mervin.

"Her house," everything be it remarked was *hers*, not his, or theirs, "her house has been altered during the summer, and a conservatory added to it, in the middle of which is a beautiful fountain."

"And in the middle of the beautiful fountain, I suppose, stands the beautiful Hebe filtering the Croton! This note-shaving must be a profitable business, when Mr. Mervin can allow his wife to squander so much money in making herself ridiculous."

Softly, softly, Mrs. Latimer, you at least think yourself a lady, let not your words contradict your thought.

Had anybody else built half a dozen conservatories, with a fountain and a nymph in each, Mrs. Latimer would not have faulted them for so doing; but of Mrs. Mervin she was both jealous and envious, and these hateful passions embittered her against the infatuated woman, whose career should have been cause for pity as well as blame.

While Mrs. Mervin's extravagance and passion for display were freely commented on, she remained in blissful ignorance of all ill-natured remarks. Courted for her wealth, and accustomed to have *her* house, *her* equipage, *her* dress, never mentioned but with the superlatives of praise, she only lived for the gratification of every wish which selfishness, ambition, or vanity dictated. Wretched misuse of the gifts of a good God. More than wretched trifling with the welfare of an immortal soul!

It was rumored that preparations were making for an evening party at Mrs. Mervin's, and great was the flutter of excitement to know who would be the favored guests.

Three weeks before the event conjecture was at an end, for invitations were then sent to all who, either in point of wealth or fashion, were thought worthy the honor.

"I have no doubt the whole thing will be a failure," said Mrs. Latimer to one of the non-admitted. "How preposterous for such a woman to attempt anything of the kind!"

"Mrs. Tomkins tells me, my dear, that there is no end to the extravagance that is going on. Porters are constantly running to the house, and Mrs. Tomkins wonders how they will dispose of all the parcels and packages that are left there."

"Yes, yes, it will be overdone; it will be vulgar. The woman has so little taste, don't you think so, Mrs. Lynde?"

"To be sure I do, my dear; what can you look for from such people? Knowing that they have nothing but their wealth on which to pride themselves, they make a most offensive display of it on all occasions. Yes, the thing, as you say, will be vulgar, a complete failure."

But the thing was neither vulgar nor a failure. Heartless and ambitious, Mrs. Mervin was yet a woman of exquisite taste, and the beautiful arrangement of her rooms, the rare and exquisite plants in her conservatory, the fragrant flowers filling every recess and lading the air with perfume, the music which "rose with its voluptuous swell," and the delicate and dainty viands worthy the banquet of a Lucullus, these made Mrs. Mervin's reunion the most brilliant of the season.

CHAPTER V.

In the innermost sanctum of his place of business sat John Mervin. His thin lips were rigidly compressed, his face was pale and haggard, and his frame bowed with weariness. He had been there the whole night, alone, and while darkness was yet struggling with daylight, he stole noiselessly out, locking the door behind him, and leaving no trace of his vigil. The next night, and the next was the same. With a dim light so placed that no reflection could fall but on the folio before him, with a stealthy tread, as if fearful that the "very stones would prate of his whereabout," with a knitted brow and a muttered imprecation, the man of wealth was looking back into the past. What saw he there? Impoverished men whose ruin he had hastened—gaunt and hunger smitten creatures in whose misery he had speculated—families without the homes of whose shelter he had robbed them. What more? A brother who had lain upon *his* mother's breast, been kissed by *his* mother's lips, cradled in *his* mother's arms—a brother—*his* brother crushed with poverty, failing in strength, watching by the sick bed of an only son, and vainly asking for relief! Not a generous thought, not a good deed, on which the mind could linger. Self, self, before all, and above all, forever, self!

It was after a night so spent, when at the regular business hour he had returned to his office, that a plain, decent-looking man, inquired of one of the clerks if he could see Mr. Mervin?

"Cannot I transact your business, sir?"

"I prefer seeing Mr. Mervin to-day."

"You will find him in the inner office, step this way."

The man approached the door, and knocked timidly as if awed at his own temerity.

"Come in," was called from the inside, and the man entered, bowing low to the sole occupant of the room.

"How are you, Mr. Croome? how are you? I'm very glad to see you—take a seat, take a seat, sir."

All this was said so blandly, that the man seemed wholly taken by surprise, and faltered in his purpose.

"A fine morning, sir," said Mervin, looking obliquely at his visitor.

"Yes sir, very fine." A pause ensued, and Mervin began to grow restless.

"I hope Mrs. Croome and the family are well." Mervin did not know whether the man had a family or not, but he hazarded the wish rather than remain silent.

"Pretty well, thank you. Mrs. Croome has been ailing a little, but she is coming around again."

Another pause ensued, and Mervin showed signs of impatience by looking at the clock, and taking up the pen, which he had put down on Croome's entrance.

"I came to see you on particular business, this morning, Mr. Mervin." Croome spoke low, and looked around as if fearful of being overheard. "I have heard rumors—"

"Rumors! of what kind, sir?" said Mervin, startled from his self-possession. Again the man hesitated.

"Speak, sir, what are the rumors you have heard? or rather, why do you come to me with them?"

"Because they concern you, sir."

"Me! how? in what way? Let me understand you."

"The say you are involved, sir."

"*They* say, who are they, that know so much about my business? My dear sir, somebody has been jesting with you."

"Well, I hope it is so, for you know, Mr. Mervin, that all I am worth in the world is in your hands."

"And it is perfectly safe, I assure you. If you have any doubts upon the subject you can immediately draw the amount. The sum is small, shall I give you a check sir?" Mervin eyed the man keenly, he saw that he was beginning to hesitate, and he knew that by urging him on to draw the money he would deter him from his purpose.

"There is not much credited to your account, I believe, but"—and here Mervin smiled significantly—"if there is any place in which you think it would be safer than with me, take it by all means."

By this time Croome had become ashamed of his suspicions, and attempted an apology for what he had said.

"Don't apologize, Mr. Croome, don't apologize, sir; it is perfectly right that you should wish to place your money in good hands, and as I have told you, it may be drawn immediately."

"Thank you, sir, thank you; I am sure it is safe with you, and if you will be troubled with it, Mr. Mervin, I have another small sum here which my brother wished me to deposit in safe hands."

"Perhaps you had better not leave it, Mr. Croome, some safer house will take it for you."

Mervin spoke facetiously, and Croome, after again apologizing for his suspicions, left his brother's money in safe keeping with his own.

On speeds the flight of time. Mr. Mervin no longer holds nightly vigils at his lonely desk. Suspicion breathes

no whisper against the stability of his fortunes. Mr. Mervin is an envied man. Mrs. Mervin queens it proudly in the charmed circle of which she has become the centre, and no courtiers more blindly follow the fashions set by the reigning monarch than does Mrs. Mervin's coterie follow hers.

The revellers who had drank so eagerly of the cup of pleasure, were becoming satiated with the draught. Belles of the last season, who still dazzled amid a blaze of jewels and gas, were envying belles of the present who could permit the daylight to look upon their charms. Lassitude and ennui were creeping over those who had been gayest in the giddy throng. Once more are they aroused. Mrs. Mervin, as she had opened, so she resolved to close the season with another brilliant fête. Again were conjecture and gossip at their envious work.

"I hear that Mrs. Mervin is having one of her suite of rooms tastefully decorated with panels and draperies, which produce quite an artistic effect, and that *tableux-vivants*, and acted charades, are to be among the entertainments of the evening. How preposterous! Is it not, my dear Mrs. Latimer?"

"There is nothing too absurd for Mrs. Mervin. I heard it was the Masque of Comus, with which she meant to astonish her guests, and that several of her satellites had been singing and rehearsing for a month past."

"Is it possible! well, after that she may attempt anything. But do you think it is true?"

"Really, I cannot tell, that is what I heard. Is it not too ridiculous to think of Mrs. Mervin setting about to revive a court pageant. I wonder you heard nothing about it, Mrs. Lynde."

"I wonder, too, my dear, for it was Mrs. Brunton who told me about the tableaux and the charades, and she generally knows all about Mrs. Mervin's movements."

Clear and cloudless rose the morning sun, and busy were the preparations for the evening festival. There was no hand-writing on the wall, but all day through the heart of the great city, beat a low note of alarm. Rumor came flying on the four winds of heaven, and some men openly wondered, while others shook their heads in silence.

A man, travel-soiled and weary, asked a question of another who was hurrying by.

"I am going there now," was the answer; "has he robbed you, too? Curses on his smooth tongue and hypocritical face!"

The wayfarer stopped and looked at his strange companion.

"Sir, here is some mistake; it is Mr. Mervin, Mr. John Mervin that I am looking for."

'Ay, ay, John Mervin, who took men's money at a time when he must have known it would never be repaid. John Mervin, who with his cursed speculations has ruined many an honest man. Why, sir, it is but a short time since I deposited with him all that my brother had saved in twelve years! and he had my own earnings too—I trusted him with all! And here has this man been living like a prince, and his wife indulging in all sorts of extravagancies, turning up her nose at decent women like Mrs. Croome, who helped her husband save the money that John Mervin and his wife were dashing upon. He's a rascal, sir, and he ought to be punished, sir. Here is his office—closed, eh! pity it was ever opened. He ought to be punished, sir—he's a rascal, sir!"

"He's my brother, sir," meekly said the weary man, as he leaned for support against the closed door of the bankrupt.

"I am sorry, very sorry! I hope you will forgive me for hurting your feelings; I did not intend to do so, indeed I did not—it never entered my mind that you were his brother."

Jesse Mervin did not reply, for his thoughts were confused and wandering. He was a stranger, surrounded by strange faces and stunning noises, and bowed with shame to the dust. He had no money to take him back to his home, for it was with difficulty he obtained enough to bring him to the city. He had struggled through sickness and want—had left his son still feeble from severe illness—had hoped for relief even until now, when he found himself deceived and ruined by—his brother!

A prayer that God would forgive that brother, was all the revenge taken by Jesse Mervin for ingratitude and wrong. He had imbibed the spirit of his Master, the spirit of Him who prayed even for His murderers—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

CHAPTER VI.

Just at the moment when her triumph was at its height—when she looked for naught but admiration and applause—when her wealth, her position in society, her success in the world of fashion, had filled her heart with overweening vanity—just then did Mrs. Mervin fall from her pride of place, and become to the envious a thing for jeers and mirth. Stripped of her ermine and her jewels, and obliged

to return to the humble home of her mother, to that home which had witnessed her falsehood, and her base barter of herself for gold; with ambition and love of show still strong within her, and striving with mortified pride; she became peevish and irritable, and dragged on an unhappy existence—a burden to her friends and a constant source of annoyance to every member of her family. Thus was verified the prediction—"That no good could come of falsehood and deceit."

John Mervin's sudden failure was like the bursting of a bubble; you looked for it, and lo! it was gone! His had been floating capital, and the winds of extravagance and speculation had borne it entirely away! He was once more poor, poor as when with his bundle and his staff he turned his back upon a brother's love. Nor was this all—he might have been unfortunate, and men even while they blamed his rashness, would have pitied his fall. But in the strict scrutiny which his indignant creditors made into his affairs, an attempt at concealment—a wide laid scheme of treachery was disclosed, by which the wretched man had thought to appropriate to his own use, what was no longer honestly his. This was the secret of his lonely vigils, when he cautiously took down folio after folio, and stole home before the dawn of day. He had made a fraudulent assignment to one on whose good faith he thought he could rely; but the quondam friend refused to render back the spoils, absconded with what he had so iniquitously obtained, and the deceiver was in turn deceived.

Yes, John Mervin had ruined himself, and had dragged down hundreds in his fall. He had ruined himself! His wealth, to which he owed a fictitious importance, had eluded his grasp, and his reputation—his honesty—his good

name—of more value than millions upon millions of sordid gold—these priceless jewels he had wickedly thrown away!

In his early career he was hard, grasping, avaricious. None could remember that he had ever fed the hungry, or clothed the naked, or done one kind and generous deed to a brother man. In later years his wife's ambition had stimulated his vanity, and still the object was self!

As if there were no life but this—no future in which he would be called to give an account of his stewardship—as if there were no world but this in which to lay up treasures—and no treasures to be laid up but such as perish in the using!

John Mervin suffered the punishment which does not always in this life overtake the wrong-doer, and wandered from the city which had been the scene of his eventful fortunes.

Sick, weary, and with his mind strangely bewildered, he had walked far one day, and his feet were swollen and blistered, and his head ached from exposure to the noonday sun.

Now cool shadows fell from the broad trees, and the evening wind fanned his fevered brow. Nature was singing her evening lullaby and the flowers drooped their petals and folded their leaves, and the birds hushed their songs, and with heads hidden behind their wings, betook them to repose. Slant rays of glory quivered through the trees, as the broad disc of the golden sun disappeared behind a mass of crimsoned clouds. "Still lingered twilight at heaven's western gate," making broad paths of radiance on which angels might descend to earth. A little deeper grew the shade—a little deeper—and then uprose the harvest-moon, flooding both earth and heaven with silvery

light. Calm, peaceful, holy was the scene, and under its softening influence the hard-hearted, the avaricious, the ruined man bowed his head and wept! He bowed his head and wept, bitterly, in agony he wept! The fountain of thought was stirred, and earnestly, sorrowfully, did he gaze into the troubled waters!

For about an hour he sat thus, then rose and tottered to a house not far distant. Through an open window he saw the family at their evening devotions. They were praying to the God whom he had for so many years forgotten—to the God to whom in childhood he had been taught to pray. Awed and conscience-smitten, he turned away. Again he went back and put his foot on the threshold, but his heart failed him and he crept away toward the barn. Pulling out the wooden pin that fastened the latch, he entered, and overcome by fatigue sat down and fell asleep.

A cloudless morning shed its light on the dew-bejeweled earth, and the flowers raised their heads, and the birds shook their plumage and soared heavenward, singing their matin song.

The lowing of cattle, the tinkling of bells, the whirring of insect wings, and the thousand sounds of life were heard on every side, but the tired traveller did not awake!

Two men left the house on the threshold of which he faltered the night before. They stood looking at a broad field of maize which covered a gentle slope, and was fast ripening in the genial sunshine. On every side were marks of thrift and care. Not a spot that could be rendered available was left untilled, and silken swathed corn, and bearded grain, alike promised a rich harvest.

"Thank God, the abundance of this year's crop will

make up for the failure of the last," said the elder of the two men, "and Mr. Croome shall have a barrel of flour from my best wheat as soon as it is ready."

"You have paid him all he lent to bring you home, I believe, father."

"Yes, but his kindness I can never repay. The poor man has been a heavy loser by my brother's failure, and now that you have grown strong again, Archie, and that Providence has blessed our labors, we must try and do something to help Mr. Croome."

"Isn't it strange, father, that nothing can be heard of my uncle? I often wonder where he has gone, or what has become of him—don't you?"

This was the one subject on which Jesse Mervin seldom spoke to his children, and could he have concealed his brother's guilt, he would gladly have done so. But when he returned home sick and dispirited, with no money save what had been loaned him by a stranger, concealment was no longer possible.

"Yes, I wonder, too, my son, and it is my daily prayer that I may live to see him once more. How comfortable he could be with us, Archie. Well, well, God knows best."

The two men now turned their steps toward the barn, and Jesse Mervin was the first to enter. As he did so he started, for just inside the door lay a man poorly clad, his head resting on one arm, while his face was partly concealed by the other.

"Here is some unfortunate being who must have been intoxicated and lain down to sleep. Help me a little, Archie, and we will put him on the hay, this is rather a hard bed for him."

Jesse Mervin stooped down, and as he attempted to

raise the stranger, the hand fell which had covered the face, and exposed to view the emaciated features.

"Just God! can this be he? O, I dreamed not of *such* a meeting when I prayed that I might see him again."

Archie Mervin needed no more to tell him who it was that lay before them, and he hastened to the side of his father, who in agony was rubbing the hands, and chafing the temples of the apparently lifeless man.

"Speak to me, John—only one word speak to me—do you know me?—it is me—it is Jesse—it is your brother—John!—John!—for God's sake speak to me!"

John Mervin's chest heaved—his lips moved—his eyes opened, and he looked at his brother. O, the imploring agony of that look! O, the anguish of him who bent to hear the gasping sounds that struggled for utterance! "For-give—me—for-give—me—broth-er."

"As I hope for forgiveness from God, so do I forgive you, my brother."

Jesse felt the relaxing fingers striving to return his grasp. Over the face of the dying man came a faint smile, the shadow of what had rested there in boyhood—and again, John Mervin slept!

But now it was a sleep over which a brother's voice had no power! A sleep that would never more be broken until the trump of the archangel awake the dead! In the outhouse of the brother to whom he had been so ungrateful—in the arms of the brother whom he had so cruelly wronged, stripped of the wealth for which he had hardened his heart and periled his salvation—John Mervin slept!

Christine.

UNCLE WALTER'S STORY.

THIS is the age of progress, of telegraph, of steam, of social go-a-head-ativeness, or, in other words, the age of making haste to be rich, with too often a stolid obliviousness of the snare into which the winner of wealth might fall at the end of the race. What has such an age to do with love stories? Are not such old-fashioned notions exploded? And has it not become problematical whether the passion known by the name of love ever had existence; and if it ever did exist, save in the brain of some demented girl, should it not be frowned out of society?

"Heyday! my little niece; what is all this tirade about? What surly woman-hater has been decrying the novelettes of the day?"

"Oh! Uncle Walter; how did you manage to steal in so quietly, and look over my shoulder without my being aware of it?"

"Is that the way you mean to escape—answering one question by asking another? It was very easy for me to slip through an open door to which your back was turned, while your head was bent down, and your mind was pondering on love stories."

"Not exactly on love stories, uncle, but on the hue and cry raised against them, when they appear in the magazines. Lengthen out a love tale, and publish it in a book; that is altogether a different affair, and no voice is raised against it. Yet I venture to say, that in all the love stories published in our magazines since they were first issued, there will not be found a tithe of the immorality that teems in the foreign novels whose translations almost flood the press. Now, the world is full of love. From the bright birds, which, in the summer sunshine, pour love-melody upon the breeze—from the tiniest blossom that rears its head to drink the splendors of the golden day—from these, up to the homes and hearths consecrated by the holiest sympathies of our nature, (and oh! God help the homes where love is not!)—from these, link by link, up to the golden chain by which angels pass from earth to heaven—from these, upward still, higher, still higher, up to where burning seraphs sing their praise before the great white throne—all, all is love!"

"Hey, what a flight! But what has such love to do with sickly, sentimental love-stories?"

"Dear uncle, let us understand each other. I have no sympathy with what you call sickly sentimentalism, but love, *true* love, is one of the most ennobling passions of the human heart. Every thought of self is merged in the one desire how best to promote the happiness of the beloved; hence that most hateful of hated vices, selfishness, cannot dwell with true love. It will not stoop to petty deceits, to shifts, to subterfuges; hence all that is open, candid, honest, belongs to true love. It will not swerve from the path of duty, but will pass unfaltering through the furnace of trial with the love-angel folded to its heart. Look at the

babe upon its mother's knee! its first lispings are words of love. Look at the wife who has pledged her vows at the holy altar. See her brightening her husband's home with sunny smiles; see her watching over him in sickness, soothing him in sorrow, and when misfortunes lower around him, see her cling to him more tenderly. When, perhaps, prompted by despair, he wishes to be left alone in his wretchedness, and exclaims, 'Leave me,' listen to the wifely answer, 'Why, all have left thee!'"

"Stop, niece, pray stop. I shall never be able to follow in that love-world of yours. I meant that you should read to me for an hour or two. Here, sit down like a sensible girl, and read the 'Vestiges of Creation.' Away with the frivolities of love, and let us in stead have the mysteries of science."

"Uncle dear, don't ask me to read that book now. Its theories are very ingenious, but you know I belong to the same class as Cowper's good dame, who

"Knew, and knew no more, her Bible true."

Now, to one that believes that God made man in his own image, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, it is very absurd to imagine that the poor biped passed through so many transformations as the author of the 'Vestiges' would have us believe he did."

"You are in a very captious mood to-day," said my uncle. "What say you to Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity? No! Well, here is old Burton himself. Let us study for awhile his quaint 'Anatomie.'"

I saw by the twinkle in Uncle Walter's eye that he was jesting with me, and I determined to punish him forthwith. Pushing aside the books and papers lying on the

table, and wheeling a large arm-chair, such as has been aptly termed "Sleepy Hollow," in front of the open window, I took his hands in mine, and led him to the seat.

"Now, uncle," said I, "you are my prisoner until you tell me a veritable love-story."

"Nonsense, child, I can't tell one."

"Oh! uncle, uncle; don't you recollect how I caught you one evening repeating—

'Oh! love, religion, music; all
That's left of Eden upon earth!'

Have you forgotten your admiration of that most exquisite passage in Coleridge's Wallenstein—

'For fable is Love's home!'

Uncle mine, you must tell me a love story. I am sure you can tell one just as easily as you repeated 'Beauty and the Beast,' when I sat on your knee long ago. That's a dear, good uncle; you will, will you not?"

Uncle Walter's face grew grave and sad, and I had come to the resolution not to torment him any more, when he said:

"I will go to my room for a few moments; when I return, I will tell you a story."

Uncle Walter was my mother's eldest brother. He was a bachelor, and though over fifty, we never called him *old* bachelor. Old! the idea was preposterous! Dear Uncle Walter, with his fine, florid complexion, and bright hazel eye, with a kind word ever on his lip, and a perpetual fountain of love within his heart; ever ready to tell fairy tales, or to join in blind-man's-buff; the most expert in raising the Christmas tree, and the most generous in load-

ing it with gifts—it would have been a libel to call Uncle Walter *old* bachelor.

In his youth, my uncle had travelled much in foreign parts. He had visited most of Northern Europe, and when I was a little girl, my place was on his knee, where I listened with wonder to his tales of Russia, shuddered as he spoke of the Norwegian Maelstrom, or hung delighted on his pictures of Swedish life. How have those old talks with Uncle Walter since given redoubled zest to Frederica Bremer's tales of Sweden!

When my uncle returned he had a package in his hand, which he laid upon my writing-desk, and after sitting silent some minutes, he said to me—

"There is something I have brought for you to look at."

I broke the seal of the envelope, and saw several letters, the paper of which had grown yellow, and the ink faded. One small parcel was tied with a ribbon. I held it in my hand, and glanced inquiringly at my uncle.

"Open it," he said, in a tremulous voice. Mechanically I obeyed. It was a miniature on ivory of a young and lovely woman. There were the bright blue eyes and soft flaxen hair peculiar to Swedish women, while the countenance was calm, holy, and Madonna-like in its purity and beauty.

"Oh! who is this lovely creature?" I exclaimed, pressing the beautiful semblance to my lips. "Uncle, dear, I am filled with curiosity; do tell me all about her. I am sure hers must be a love story."

Uncle Walter looked disturbed, and sighed deeply. I had never seen him so moved before, and surmising that he had more than a common interest in the original of the miniature, I repented of my folly, and begging him to

think no more of the story, said that I would read to him. Taking down Willis' poems, I opened at "Hagar in the Wilderness," which I knew to be an especial favorite of my uncle's, and commenced reading.

He had thrown himself back in his chair, and covered his face with one of his hands. I was sitting beside him on a low ottoman, holding in mine the hand that lay listlessly in his lap. I read on, until I reached the beautiful lines—

> "Oh! man may bear with suffering; his heart
> Is a strong thing, and godlike in the grasp
> Of pain that wrings mortality: but tear
> One cord affection clings to, part one tie
> That binds him to a woman's delicate love,
> And his great spirit yieldeth like a reed."

While reading this passage, I felt my uncle's hand tremble in mine, and I laid down the book. It appeared as if everything I did, instead of soothing, as I intended, but pained him more and more. I sat silent, with tears in my eyes, fearful that if I attempted further kindness, I should but blunder upon some wrong method of showing it. My uncle was the first to speak.

"Dear child," said he, laying his hand caressingly on my head, "I thought that I could bear with more fortitude these remembrances of the past. I meant some day or other to give you that miniature, and to tell you of the original. Let me tell you now—nay," he added, seeing me about to speak, "it must be now, or my courage may again fail me."

I drew closer to Sleepy Hollow, placed my finger on my lip, as I am wont to do when I am anxious to hear every word that is spoken, and listened to my uncle's story.

"When I first went abroad, I was intrusted with letters from a highly esteemed friend to his relatives in Stockholm.

"It was on a Sunday that I went to the house of Gustave Bernstein, for the purpose of delivering the parcels I had in charge. The bells were ringing for morning service, and some of the members of Mr. Bernstein's family had already gone to church. He was still at home, and received me warmly. After many inquiries concerning his relatives, he told me that the rite of confirmation was that day to be administered by the Bishop, and invited me, if I had no pressing engagement, to accompany him and see the ceremony. I consented gladly. Holy and beautiful sight! The youth of both sexes filled the chancel around the altar.

'On the right hand the boys had their places,
Delicate figures, with close curling hair and cheeks rosy-blooming;
But on the left hand of these, there stood the tremulous lilies,
Tinged with the blushing light of the morning, the diffident maidens,
Folding their hands in prayer, and their eyes cast down on the pavement.'

'Among that group of fair young maidens was one, whose saint-like countenance full of the inner light of the spiritual life, drew my thoughts from all the rest. It seemed in that blessed moment as if her guardian angel hovered so near that he cast the reflection of his own brightness on her who was the object of his care.

"My soul was soothed and elevated as I continued to gaze on the young girl's angelic beauty, and the world, with its petty cares and clashing interests, was forgotten. The blessing was pronounced. The solemn strains of

Handel pealed from the organ. The congregation slowly moved from the sacred edifice. I could think of nothing but the vision of purity which had been revealed to my sight. I went home with Mr. Bernstein, like one who walks in his sleep. Accepting his invitation to dinner, I strove to rouse myself from the abstraction into which I had fallen, and talked with my host of his relatives beyond the sea. While conversing, the door opened and a female entered.

"'Christine,' said Mr. Bernstein, 'this is the gentleman who brought you the miniature of your aunt;' then turning to me he introduced his niece.

"I knew not, in my confusion, what I said, but I saw that Christine blushed. It must have been that she felt for my embarrassment. With a charming frankness, she extended her hand and told me how much she thanked me for having brought these love-tokens from abroad. I was in Elysium! The hand that pressed mine was that of the young maiden, whose angel watched beside her at the altar. Yes, that maiden was Christine!

"Open-hearted hospitality, simple, unobtrusive kindness, threw a charm around the home of my Swedish friends, and during my stay in Stockholm I was their daily guest.

"From her uncle I learned that Christine was motherless, and that from the age of five years she had grown up under the charge of her father, the estimable pastor Bernstein.

"Living a life of seclusion in a village whose inhabitants were marked by an almost patriarchal simplicity of habits and pursuits, Christine had reached womanhood with a spirit stainless as the lotus-leaf, when it first unfolds its beauties to the light of day.

"About a year after the death of his wife, the good clergyman had received into his house the orphan son of an old friend. Carl and Christine shared the same sports and the same studies 'Baith bent down ower ae braid page,' and the boy watched with delight his companion's thirst for knowledge—thirst as intense as that of Lilis, who won the bright-winged angel from his native heaven. Ah! Christine wanted but the wings to make her an angel too! And yet she was a very woman in her quick, ardent feelings, in her strong capacity for loving, in her ideal dreamings, fostered by familiarity with the Sagas of her native land.

"But this was Christine's inner world. Here she dwelt apart, communing with the beautiful and good. She affected no eccentricities of speech or conduct. She made no unwomanly display of her deep and varied acquirements. To the every-day observer she was but the quiet daughter of a quiet country pastor, moving in her limited sphere of duty with a calm demeanor, and a kind care for every one of her father's parishioners. To her father she was the ever attentive, loving child; nurse, housekeeper, companion; the light of his home, and the pride of his heart. To the boy Carl she was the embodiment of all sweet and lovely thoughts; an idol to be worshipped; a blessed child of dream-land; an Undine, with her woman soul, calm, subdued, and holy as a poet's dream of love.

"Alas for Carl! Christine regarded him but as a dear brother. Her very confidingness, her open, child-like kindness, taught him this. When, after an absence of four years at the university, he returned to find his playmate grown to womanhood, and when she met him frankly, with no blush on her cheek, no sinking of the voice, no nervous

trembling of the hand; while his heart throbbed tumultuously, and his lips could hardly fashion their utterance to meet her ear—in that moment was dissipated the golden day-dream of the student's life. In that moment he knew that he was not beloved.

"Pastor Bernstein gazed delightedly on his own boy, as he fondly called Carl, and already in fancy saw him the husband of Christine.

"The good old man had long wished that his young friend might be his successor in the ministry, and that, ere he slept with his fathers, he might give his darling child to the fond protection of his favorite. It never occurred to the worthy pastor that his daughter might not love Carl. He had seen them grow up from childhood apparently attached to each other; one in their pursuits, their sorrows and their joys, and he hoped that the cord was silently and surely weaving, which would make them one in their fates and in their lives.

"Bitter was his disappointment when he learned that there was no foundation for his hope, and so anxious was he for the accomplishment of his wishes, that he bade the young man not despair, for Christine might yet be won. He daily watched his daughter, as if his happiness depended on any show of kindness from her to Carl; and if he thought at any time her manner toward him was more tender than usual, the old man's eyes would brighten with delight.

"It was while matters were in this state, that I arrived in Stockholm, and was present at the confirmation of Christine. She had then been staying a month with her relatives, and was soon to go home. Her uncle would accompany her, and a warm invitation was given me to go with

them, and let the pastor hear from my own lips of the welfare of his dearly-loved youngest sister. Almost too glad to speak my thanks, and afraid that my emotion might betray itself, I accepted the invitation.

"There are some quiet, out-of-the-way nooks in this world of ours, which serve to remind one of Eden before the serpent left his trail upon the flowers, and such a spot was the parsonage of good pastor Bernstein. There are some fresh, young, innocent hearts which would have been meet inhabitants of that primeval paradise ere the first woman believed too easily the serpent's honied lies. Such a heart was Christine's.

"It was enough for the old man to learn that I knew and esteemed his sister, to win for me his warmest hospitality; and when Gustave Bernstein was about to return home, it needed little persuasion to make me remain. A love of nature, a love of books, a love of Christine—what a world of happiness was mine in that secluded parsonage? And when a fawn-like shyness, a sudden drooping of the eyelid, a quick mounting of the eloquent blood, all told me in unmistakable language that Christine regarded me in a warmer light than that of a friend, my heart was intoxicated with the fulness of its bliss.

"Pastor Bernstein was unconscious of our mutual passion; but Carl—from my heart I pitied him! With the unrequited love of a life-time corroding into his soul, he was doomed daily to see the mute tokens of Christine's devotion to another. I call them mute tokens, for the gentle girl shrank from paining the playmate of her early years by any show of preference for me when he was present. A soft delicious languor was steeping my senses in forgetfulness, when I was roused by a letter from home.

"My mother, whom I had left in the full enjoyment of health, was alarmingly ill, and my father wrote for my immediate return. I was inexpressibly shocked at this intelligence. This was not a time to speak to pastor Bernstein of my love for his daughter. My feelings were too much harrowed at the thought of losing my mother, and my conscience reproached me with the selfishness which had lulled me into forgetfulness of home.

"My noble Christine! how tenderly she sought to sooth my grief, and to make me believe that we should soon be re-united. My darling Christine! how she outpoured the rich hoard of her love to bless me in the hour of parting.

"'I dread the effect on my father, when he can no longer hope that I may marry Carl. But I am yours, Walter; in time and eternity, I am yours.'

"She checked herself, as if she were saying too much. Modesty and love dwelt together in her pure soul.

"'Bless you for those words, my own Christine. I know not when I may return, but if ever you find me to be faithless, from that moment you are free.'

"She looked up at me with her dear innocent eyes, wondering why I spoke of faithlessness to her. Ah! 'the finest hair casts a shadow.'

"It was about two months before I reached home. My mother was still living; but oh, my heart was agonized, as I looked on the wan features and attenuated form of my beloved parent. Contrary to all expectations, she was spared to us until the following spring. I never left her, except when compelled to do so. The struggle between death and life, between the perishable body and the imperishable spirit, was at length over. I followed her remains to the grave. I heard the earth fall upon her

coffin. Oh! mournfullest of all mournful sounds! Then we feel in reality that our love is no longer of avail. It can no more prepare the warm place at the fireside, or shelter from the wind and the rain the beloved. The forms once so carefully guarded, there they lie! The snows of winter fall upon them, the suns of summer shine upon them, the storm spends its fury on their narrow dwelling—still, cold, unconscious, there they lie! If we have grieved them, and if the memory of our waywardness bows our spirits to the dust, they hear not our pleadings for pardon, they see not our tears of agony, they cannot fold to us their hearts, and whisper that we are forgiven —ah! no, no; mute, cold, unconscious, there they lie! We shall not behold them again until the morning of the resurrection. Then, purified, glorified, we shall behold them again. 'For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality!' Thank God, thank God for the glorious hope!

"My father did not long survive the loss of my mother. Their union had been so closely cemented by years of mutual love, that the breaking of one life-cord loosened the other, and in a little while they slept side by side in their silent home.

"Three sisters and a little brother were left to my care. I could not leave them alone, and thus violate the trust reposed in me by my dying parents, and yet my heart yearned to be with Christine. I had written to her, but it was so long before I obtained an answer that my spirit chafed under the delay. At last I received a letter from Christine. She told me of her father's sorrow, and of the tender mournfulness with which he regarded Carl. Her union with me seemed to the good pastor wholly impracti-

cable. I resided in a distant land, and was bound to it by ties the most sacred. Never could he part with his darling, never could he suffer her to go from him—she, the one pet lamb of the village shepherd. To such a letter what reply could I make, but to beg Christine to wait, and to hope?

"Before I went abroad I had often visited the family of Mr. Perceval. Between his daughter Agnes and myself had sprung up a sort of flirting intimacy; that is, I waited on her to places of public amusement, was always the first to ask her hand for the dance, and in many ways made myself agreeable to her. Secluded from society by the afflictions in our family, I had seldom seen Agnes since my return, though I found that she was on terms of intimacy with my sisters, and that I had often been the theme of her discourse. Agnes Perceval was what is called a magnificent woman. Tall, of a full and luxurious form, with large black eyes, which, except when half veiled by the lids, might be thought too bold in expression; a complexion in which the slightest shade of olive, mingling with the rich warm blood of youth, imparted a hue sunny as that on the cheek of a beautiful Contadina, Agnes moved and looked a queen.

"It was strange that during our long acquaintance my heart had never done homage to her charms. But hers was not the style of beauty I admired. It was too commanding, too Juno-like, better fitted for the gayety of the crowded *salon* than for the quiet of the domestic hearth. Oh, how unlike was she to Christine!

"When I first met Agnes, after the death of my father, her manner was so gentle, so full of sympathy, that she appeared to me in a more favorable light than when we had laughed and flirted together before I left home. Time,

the healer of many sorrows, was noiselessly stealing month after month of my years of life, and I once more began to mingle with my fellows.

"But everywhere there was a void. I missed my blessed mother's welcoming smile, I missed my noble father's approving voice, and to add to my wretchedness, I heard no more from Christine. Pride and jealousy took possession of my soul. I imagined her the wife of Carl, happy in her new relations, blessed by her father, forgetful of myself. In these unhappy moments, when the tempest of passion was raging within, I was sometimes on the point of offering myself to Agnes.

"'How unmanly it is,' I would say to myself, 'to suffer thus for a woman who has forgotten me! I know that Agnes regards me with tenderness, why not make her happy?'

"But when the mind-storm was stilled, then questions uprose from the innermost depths of the spirit. 'Do you love Agnes? Would it be honorable to marry her from motives of jealousy or pique? Would such marriage make either happy?' Loudly my heart answered, 'no!'

"Agnes and my eldest sister were almost inseparable. They were both accomplished musicians, possessing voices of wonderful power and sweetness, which harmonized and blended together, like one rich strain of airy harp-chords. One evening I was sitting alone, brooding over my griefs. The dim twilight was softly veiling all outward objects, and gradually, as they faded from the view, the light within the soul became more clear and radiant. I have often thought it must be so with the blind—that those whom 'ever-during dark surrounds,' must have their mental vision increased ten-fold. Oh, what hallowed remembrances come to us in the soft hush of twilight!

'Then the forms of the departed
Enter at the open door;
The beloved, the true-hearted,
Come to visit us once more.'

"Down the long vista of years glides thought after thought. Every kind word to which we have listened, every warm hand-pressure we have returned, every heart-greeting to which our heart has responded, every look and every tone of the parted, 'the mourned, the loved, the lost,' there they are in the soul-world, bright with the mingled halo of memory and love. And in the midnight, the awful, solemn midnight, how we strive to look into the spirit-land, and fathom the mysterious, the unknown! How we long to soar above the stars, and grapple with the knowledge of angels! How the mind reels and bends beneath the weight of thought!

"My sister and Agnes entered the room where I was sitting without observing me. They had evidently been conversing together on some exciting topic, and I heard my sister say, 'He shall be rid of this foolish passion. Shame on Walter, that he is not more a man.' I was about to leave my seat when Agnes spoke.

"'Dear Margaret,' said she to my sister, 'Walter does not know how fondly I love him. Oh, what would I not do to win his love in return!'

"I was shocked at this bold avowal. However much a man may be gratified by the love of a beautiful woman, his better nature revolts at hearing the declaration of passion come first from her. It is like stripping the moss from the bud of the rose, like crushing the fragrance from the dewy violet.

"I was certainly in an unenviable, and, as it appeared

to me, a dishonorable position; but motives of delicacy toward Agnes now prevented my disclosing myself, and I drew farther behind the curtain that draped the window.

"'Do you think, Margaret,' said Agnes, resuming the conversation, 'that Christine really loves your brother? I do not. How could she permit him to leave her without knowing when he might return? Why did she not accompany him—if not with her father's consent, why then without it? No, no, she does not love Walter as she ought. You remember your telling me what your brother said about her loveliness when he placed the half-blown rose in Christine's hair.'

"Without waiting for a reply, Agnes turned to the piano and commenced singing—

Oh, take from thy clustering curls the rose,
Why, false one, why should it linger there?
Thou hast taught another his trust to repose;
He has placed that bud in thy golden hair.
But ere the perfume has left the flower,
Thou wilt tire like the child of his gilded toy,
And tiring thus thou wilt scorn the hour
That brings to thy feet the enamored boy.

Then take the rose from thy polished brow,
No emblem it of a love like thine;
'Tis the flower of love, and thy heartless vow
Has never been breathed at feeling's shrine.
Thy soul has ne'er burned with love's ardent flame,
Thy smiles they are false, thy words like the air;
Thou wouldst crush that bud if *another* came;
Then take it now, from thy golden hair.

"There was a pause of a few moments, when my sister spoke—

"'Agnes,' said she, 'it is impossible that Walter should see you daily, and remain indifferent toward you. In a short time he will forget this silly Swedish romance. You know his tastes and his prejudices, and can easily flatter the one, and be careful not to offend the other.'

"'Margaret, I have no doubt that Christine received the attentions of Carl before she saw your brother. Trust me, she was only coquetting with Walter, and it would not surprise me to hear that she had married her first admirer.'

"'Heaven grant she may! Touch Walter's pride and you are sure to conquer his passion. Now, Aggy, sing me that song you wrote when Walter, in a flight of sentimentalism, once asked, 'Do you ever think of me?'

"Agnes again played an accompaniment as she sang—

What! think of thee! Yes, in the morn's early hour,
Thou art first in my memory's sight;
I tremble and wonder that day has no power
O'er the visions that haunt me by night.

What! think of thee! Yes, when amid the gay throng,
When the lovely and happy are near,
I sigh for thy glance, and in sadness I long
For thine accents to fall on mine ear.

What! think of thee! Yes, every moment I live,
Be it joyous or saddening to me,
I see thee, I hear thee; may heaven forgive
If too often I think upon thee.

"The song ceased. The girls left the room together, and I was once more alone. The doubts of Christine's constancy, suggested by Agnes, were insupportable; while the

knowledge of Agnes's love for me bewildered and left me undecided how to act.

"At first I thought to tell my sister that I had overheard their conversation, but this would have been embarrassing to us all, so I kept the secret in my own breast, and met her and Agnes with my usual demeanor.

"A twelvemonth had passed since my return home, and during that time I had received but one letter from Christine. I almost believed that she had forgotten me, and pride urged that I should forget her. Alas, how hard it is to unwind the tendrils of love from around the heart; to cast from us the passion we have nursed until its root is interwoven with the fibres of our life! Slowly, slowly, we part each delicate tendril, pausing ever, and hoping that one may still be left! While there remains a vestige of hope, though it be light as the gossamer which floats upon the breeze, unsubstantial as the palace shadowed in the clowds, slowly, slowly, fibre after fibre is loosened, and the torture of the soul prolonged.

"I wrote again. Six months elapsed and brought no answer. Then came the harrowing thought that Christine was dead! All this time I was compelled to remain at home, owing to a protracted lawsuit, arising out of some business unsettled at my father's death.

"I now determined on writing to Christine's uncle in Stockholm, telling him of my love for his niece, and of the misery I endured from her continued silence. The prisoner, notching the dismal days and nights on the stick in his lonely cell, could not have felt the time drag more wearily than did I, while waiting an answer to my letter. At last it came. It was from Gustave Bernstein. Trembling with agitation, I ran my eye over the sheet until it rested

on the name of Christine. At the perusal of that one paragraph my sight seemed blasted. Christine was married to Carl! It was as if the light had been suddenly blotted from the sky; as if the blackness of thick darkness had fallen upon me. I sat long in a state of stupor, unable to read more. When I did, I learned that Christine, in compliance with the earnest wish of her father, had consented to marry his favorite, and that, at the request of the bride, whose health was delicate, the marriage had been a private one. Here, then, was the end of my hopes. The last tendril was broken! the last fibre rooted out! I thought so then, but who can fathom the depths of the human heart?

"Calling all my pride to my aid, I determined on forgetting the woman who could thus forget herself. I was ashamed of the wretchedness I had suffered on her account, unworthy as I deemed her of my love. But the arrow had not been withdrawn; it still rankled, though for a while its point was dulled against the shield of pride.

"I now tried to think that all my preconceived ideas of woman's truthfulness and loveliness of character were overdrawn; that those ideas were merely the fruits of a too romantic imagination.

"But, if one woman had deceived me, another loved me. I had heard it from her own lips, when she knew not that I was by to listen. And now I tried to persuade myself that it was a false delicacy which had so shocked me on hearing Agnes's avowal. With this tempest of passion raging within and dethroning reason, I talked to Agnes of love. Of love! what desecration in such a mad, heartless use of that holy word. My sister's delight knew no bounds. Agnes openly showed her preference for me, at the risk,

very frequently, of driving me from her; but of this she knew nothing. Nearer and nearer to the vortex, Agnes and I were to be married! Sure that I was about to seal my misery, I was yet reckless. I thought by that deed to prove to my heart that I had forgotten Christine!

"Preparations were making for our approaching nuptials. Friends congratulated us, and Agnes was more brilliantly beautiful than ever. One morning I was sitting beside my affianced, discussing with apparent interest, but far-away thoughts, the very important question whether there should be two bridesmaids or three. For my own part, I cared but little whether there were any at all, but, as usual, I yielded the point to Agnes, who had previously decided on three. While we were yet talking, my servant handed me a package which had just been left for me. My hand shook nervously when, on taking it, I recognized the writing of Gustave Bernstein. At that moment my sister entered, and I left Agnes and her together, while, with a vague presentiment of evil, I retired to my room. A year had passed since I received the letter announcing Christine's marriage, and I supposed that all correspondence with my Swedish friends had forever ceased. What then could be the import of these letters? for it was evident that several were enclosed in the envelope.

"Impatiently, yet fearingly, I broke the seal. The first I opened was from Mr. Bernstein. Christine was dead! Oh, how my old fondness welled up within my heart, and would not be kept back. Christine was dead! The day that I had seen her in her virgin purity, renewing her baptismal vows at the altar—the blessed hours we had spent together in the quiet parsonage—the flowers we had gathered on the hills—the songs she had sung to me at even-

tide—the books we had read in the quaint old library—the tears she shed at parting—the blessing—the farewell! There they were as things of yesterday; there they were, remembered—worshipped—filling my heart to overflowing. There was no thought of her estrangement, no proud repelling of my newly-awakened tenderness; ah no, Christine was dead!

"I know not what length of time elapsed before I again examined the package. When I did so, I found that several of the letters were my own; they were those I had sent to Christine. I took up another. How nervously did I press it to my lips. *Her* hand had traced these characters—the hand which had been clasped in mine—the hand which was cold in death—Christine's hand had written it! Did I read aright? Again and again my eye wandered over the lines.

"'I am dying, Walter, and I trust it is not wrong now to tell you how I have sorrowed over the past. Oh, Walter, why did you conceal aught from me—from me, who opened to you the inmost thoughts of my soul? Had you told me all at first, what a world of misery might have been spared me! Ah! I would not have so wept over the promise to be yours in time and eternity. Honor would have forbidden that promise to be made. When I first learned that your plighted troth belonged to another, the tidings fell like an iee-bolt on my heart. And when I was conjured, even by the love I bore you, to take pity on another, whose love was strong as mine—one whom you were bound by solemn engagements to make your wife—then, though my life-cord had broken in the struggle, I resolved to east you from me, not in anger, not in disdain, but in pity and in grief. You but saw the weaker, the more yield-

ing part of my nature; you knew not, Walter, how I could nerve myself for a high task. You knew not how a woman, frail in body, could be strong in soul. Carefully I banished every fond thought of you which sprung unbidden in my breast. Were you not the betrothed of another? And would it not have been sinful longer to regard you with love? My life was henceforth to be devoted to my father's happiness. You knew how earnestly he wished me to marry Carl. When I had schooled my heart to think of you as the husband of the woman whose love you had first won, I yielded to my father's wishes; not lightly, not from motives of pique toward you, but to soothe the last moments of my parent's life; to see him die happy in the thought that he left me to the protection of his beloved ward. And Carl knew all, all, and yet, with a love surpassing knowledge, he made me his wife.

"'And now was my soul strengthened and purified by close communion with his. To assist him in his labors, to cheer him in his solitude, to look with him for the 'rest which remaineth for the people of God,' all these were sweet to me. Honorable motives, dutiful actions, brought their sure reward. My father's spirit could look approvingly upon his child.

"'In the midst of this life of usefulness, Carl was called suddenly away. The blow stunned me, but I knew that it came from a friendly hand. My heart still needed the baptism of suffering to wash it for heaven.

"'And now that I am dying, Walter, I wish you to know the cause of my silence; the reason why I did not keep my promise. I wish no blot to rest on my memory when I am gone. I have thought, too—vainly perhaps—that you might be happier if you knew no feeling of

unkindness toward you had ever been harbored in my breast.

"'Your letters, and the letters of her who is now your wife, you will receive with this. I have prayed for you both, Walter, that grace and strength might be given to assist you in bearing one another's burdens in the journey of life. I have prayed for you and for myself, that we might be permitted to enter the mansions prepared for the loved of the Father. Will you not pray for it, too, Walter? Ah, in the strange and sad vicissitudes of daily life, in the awful hour of approaching dissolution, what can we frail creatures do but pray? Farewell, Walter, and may your last moments be tranquil as those of

CHRISTINE.'

"I was bewildered; my brain became confused, and I lost all consciousness when I had read Christine's letter. How long I remained in this state of stupor I know not, but I was aroused by a knocking at the door. It was my sister. She told me that Agnes had returned home, wondering at my strange conduct in not coming back to them, after my abrupt departure. Agnes! she had been totally forgotten. I told my sister that I was not well, and would not leave my room until morning. When she had gone, I once more read the mournful breathings which death had wrung from the heart of her I loved. I turned from them to look at that which had caused my misery. Some demon had been envious of my happiness. Tossing aside my own letters, I took up one, the handwriting of which seemed familiar to me, but at the instant I could not recollect where I had seen it before. As I read, light dawned upon me. It had been written by Agnes! She told of my engagement to her previous to my going abroad,

and with all the eloquent pleadings she could so well employ, begged Christine not to answer my letters. Appealing to her honor, her generosity, her womanly tenderness, she wove a tissue of falsehoods so artfully together that no one, pure minded as Christine, could dream of their being untrue. And it was this woman, so deceitful, so base, that I, in my madness, was about to make my wife!

"At an early hour the next day I called upon Agnes. She met me, radiant with smiles, and her dark eyes flashing with the consciousness of superb beauty. I looked on her with abhorrence, and a feeling akin to hate took possession of my soul. She perceived my disturbed manner, and began to rally me on my strange appearance. For some moments I dared not trust myself to speak, lest in my bitterness I should forget what was due to her sex. Extending my hand, I held before her the letter she had written to Christine, and hoarsely murmured—

"'Agnes, do you know this?'

"As she looked on it her face became pale and terror-stricken, but immediately recovering herself, she answered—

"'No!'

"'Agnes,' said I, regarding her with a fixed and penetrating look, 'why deny what your conscience tells you is true? Wretched woman, how could you thus work the misery of one who was as far above you, as the angels are above us?'

"Again Agnes attempted a denial, in a louder and firmer tone than before.

"'Add not falsehood to falsehood,' I exclaimed, 'heap not infamy on infamy. From this moment we are strangers.'

"'Walter Drayton, you dare not *now* go back; I say you dare not!'

"'I dare, and I will. No power on earth could make me call *you* wife. Tell what you please about the breaking of our engagement, I shall never stoop to contradict it.'

"For a moment Agnes quailed beneath my just resentment; then, giving way to her excited feelings, she towered a very Medea in her wrath. I left her, and in a month afterward was on my way to Europe.

"I visited Gustave Bernstein, and from him obtained Christine's miniature. I wept at her grave—wept that she had died without knowing the truth. For many years I was a wanderer. On my return I learned that Agnes was married. Her husband was ugly, old, decrepit, but possessed of immense wealth. His wife despised him, and he feared her. Leading a life of splendid misery, unloved and unloving, Agnes was reaping the bitter fruits of her treachery and deceit.

"I made my home with my youngest sister, and in her happy domestic circle learned to prize the blessings which had been spared me. But though, in seeking to promote the happiness of others, I have found peace for myself; though five and twenty years have elapsed since I opened that package, never can I forget my utter desolation of heart when I learned that Christine was dead."

Dear uncle Walter, how he had suffered and sorrowed, and how bravely he had borne himself under his secret grief! My warm tears fell fast upon his hand as I pressed it to my lips. Parting my hair on my forehead, he bent and kissed me without speaking; then carefully gathering his treasures, he left me alone to think again and again of Uncle Walter's tale of love.

Catharine Clayton.

CHAPTER I.

HOURS OF SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

IN the parlor of a neat but unpretending dwelling, in one of the crowded streets of New York, was assembled the family of Mr. Clayton. It was a pleasant, bright morning in September, and the blinds were carefully drawn to exclude the sunshine, which nevertheless found its way through one small aperture, and the golden dust danced gaily in its light. A lovely little girl was looking intently upon the sunbeam. Shutting her tiny hand with a tight grasp, she would open it again, with a look of childish wonder and disappointment.

"What are you doing, Amy?" said Mrs. Clayton, who had been for some time watching the child.

"I want to get some of those beautiful things coming in the window, mamma, but I can't reach them. I wish papa would try; he's so much bigger than me."

"Papa can't catch them, dear, any more than little Amy," said the father, taking the child in his arms. "But come, give me one kiss; I must go away for a whole day, from my darling."

"Will Catharine help me then?"

"I fear even Catharine will find it difficult to help you," said her father with a smile; "but you know Willie is coming home to-day, and he will try and do everything you want him to."

"Oh, yes, dear brother Willie; but you will be home to-morrow, papa?"

"Yes, my love, and Amy will be a good little girl till pa comes back, will she not?" The promise was given and sealed with another kiss, and after taking leave of his wife and eldest daughter, Mr. Clayton rode from the house. His wife and children watched him from the window until he was out of sight. There was a shadow on the mother's brow as she stooped to kiss the forehead of little Amy, who stood on a chair by her side, and there was a tear glistening in Catharine's eye, which she wiped away unperceived, as she turned and said—

"It is only for one day, mother; to-morrow night father will be with us again."

"Yes, my dear, it is but for one day, and may God watch over him till his return." The mother and daughter were soon busily employed with their household duties, while Amy kept her place at the window, watching for the stage which was to bring home her brother Willie. At length a shout from the little one, when she saw it lumbering up the street, brought her mother to her side, and in a few minutes Willie alighted and sprung into his mother's arms.

"Where is father?" was the first question the boy asked on looking around and missing him from the group.

"He was obliged to leave home to-day, my son, but he will be with us to-morrow. Why how you've grown,

Willie! and you look so rosy; your father will be delighted to see you."

"Oh, mother, we've had capital fun!"

"Capital fun! I hope you have not neglected your studies; your father and I would be greatly grieved if you had."

"Oh no, mother; wait till I show you my medals—but after school, you know, we used to go down to the river with the teacher and bathe, and we had such times hunting for squirrels in the woods, and once we killed a snake as big as my leg. Charley Bogert and I were together, and Charley saw it first and struck it on the head with a stick, and oh, mother, if you had seen it stand strait up and hiss, I guess you'd have been frightened!"

"I didn't know snakes had legs to stand on, Willie," said Amy, who was listening earnestly to the story.

"Well, neither have they, Amy; but I mean that he reared himself right up on end, and then I flung a stick at him, and he fell down, and Charley crept behind him and gave him another hit on the head, and then I got a big stone, and we soon killed him. Oh, we had capital fun!"

"Come with me, brother, come," said Amy, "we have another canary bird, and oh, it's one of the sweetest singers, and we call it Willie. Come and hear it;" and the little one took her brother by the hand and led him away.

The day passed quickly, and before retiring for the night, Mrs. Clayton knelt with her children and asked the protection of that all-merciful One, who never slumbers nor sleeps. She asked it for the beloved partner who shared her every thought; for the children who were dear as the life-blood that warmed her heart; for herself, and for all God's creatures, and she quietly slept the sleep of innocence and peace.

"When will father be home?" asked Willie in the morning; "I want to see him so much."

"He will be here by four o'clock at the farthest," said his mother.

"Well, when I see him coming I shall go and hide behind the parlor door, and after he has kissed you all and sits down in his chair, I'll steal softly behind him and put my hands over his eyes, and tell him to guess who's there? won't that be fun! Now mind you don't tell him, Amy."

"I aint a tell tale," said the little one, pouting her pretty lip.

"I know you're not, Amy, but you'll be so glad you might forget and tell father; now I want to surprise him. It will be such capital fun."

Long before four o'clock, Amy and her brother were stationed at the window, where they were frequently joined by their mother and sister. Five, six o'clock came, but the father had not returned. Catharine was busying herself in arranging the tea-table.

"Look, mother, what fine, light rusk, you know father is so fond of them, and these preserved strawberries, they are his favorite fruit. Now Amy, don't forget to hand father his slippers, he always likes you to do it."

"And what am I to do?" said Willie, who thought he was slighted in having no particular task assigned him.

"Oh, you are to stand behind the door," said Catharine, laughing, "and to put your hands over father's eyes."

"But I want to do something more than that, and if I can't do anything else, I will set his chair at the table, and get his light coat for him, and have the newspaper ready."

During this conversation between the children, Mrs.

Clayton was at the window, straining her eyes to catch a glimpse of her husband. It was nearly seven o'clock, and the dark evening shadows were fast gathering on the horizon.

One by one they rose, and mingled, and came trooping up the sky, like spectres from the spirit-land. Fainter and fainter grew the daylight, darker and deeper hung the shadows, till the whole heavens were shrouded in one impenetrable pall.

The children drew close to the side of their mother—little Amy climbed upon her knee, and nestled in her bosom. "How dark it is, mother; oh why don't father come?"

The rain, which had been rapidly gathering, now fell in torrents, and the thunder and lightning became so appalling, that the mother and her children left the window, and the shutters were closed upon the storm.

It was ten o'clock, and the tea things still remained untouched upon the table. Mrs. Clayton strove to conceal her anxiety, while her prayers were silently ascending to the Almighty, for the safety of her husband. All at once the whole group started. A horse was heard approaching the house, and Willie flew to open the door, wholly forgetful of the little stratagem he had planned to surprise his father. On the side-walk were two men bearing a litter, while a third was holding a horse in the street. Mrs. Clayton's face turned deadly pale, and her heart died within her; she could ask no questions.

Slowly the men entered the doorway, and gently placed their burden in the hall. Willie rushed toward it and raised the cover—"Father is dead! father is dead!" shrieked he in agony and terror.

"Willie, Willie," said Catharine, laying her hand on his arm, "dear Willie, think of mother." But the poor boy was nearly frantic with grief, and Amy joined her cries with his, while Mrs. Clayton stood in a state of stupefaction.

"I am sorry for you, ma'm," said one of the men, drawing the sleeve of his coat across his eyes, "but it can't be helped; accidents will happen."

The wounded man groaned. In an instant his wife was at his side. "Oh, William! William! what a return is this!"

"I fear it is all over, Mary; but God's will be done," faintly articulated the sufferer, and then relapsed into insensibility.

"The doctor will soon be here, ma'm," said one of the men; "Matthew Green, that brought home the gentleman's horse, stopped and told him of the accident."

In a few moments the surgeon arrived, and after examining the wounds, shook his head, and by his manner alone, crushed the last spark of hope that lingered in the wife's bosom. Mrs. Clayton was a woman of delicate frame and exquisite sensibilities, yet possessing withal uncommon energy of character. Now that she had learned the worst, she asked God for strength, and sought to nerve herself for the hour of trial.

Mr. Clayton had been detained some hours longer than he expected to be, and when within a few miles of home his horse had been startled by the lightning, and set off at full speed. Mr. Clayton was thrown from the saddle, and one of his feet being entangled in the stirrup, he was dragged along the road, his body bruised and torn, and his head mangled in a shocking manner. The infuriated ani-

mal was finally stopped by a man who lived in Mr. Clayton's neighborhood, and he, procuring the assistance of others, had the unfortunate man conveyed to his home.

Another pleasant, bright morning broke in beauty on the earth; another sunbeam stole through the closely drawn shutter, but they were all unheeded, for William Clayton's wife was a widow, and his children fatherless. A dark shadow had settled on the once sunny home.

CHAPTER II.

GLIMPSES OF THE PAST.

About eighteen years before the events already related, William Clayton had commenced practice as an attorney and counsellor at law. His father, a man of moderate income, had expended the greater part of it on the education of his son, and was rewarded by seeing him win the highest honors of his class. Near where young Clayton resided dwelt the widow Stewart, and her only child, Mary, a girl of nineteen. Mrs. Stewart had lost her husband early in life, and her small annuity had been eked out by the aid of her needle. Mary was her idol, her all, and to maintain and educate her child in such a manner as her father would have wished, was the widow's constant and untiring aim. And well the gentle girl repaid her mother's love. A diligent and apt scholar, Mary won the hearts of her teachers, and when at last Mrs. Stewart proposed taking her daughter from school, as she was unable any longer to bear the expense of her education, the principal

begged that Mary might remain, saying that her services would be a sufficient compensation for the instruction she would receive in the higher branches. To this proposal her mother joyfully acceded, and soon had the gratification of seeing Mary fill the place of assistant teacher, with a salary which added considerably to their limited income.

Young Clayton had met Mary Stewart at the house of a mutual friend, and the casual acquaintance soon ripened into an intimacy which led him often to the widow's dwelling. When at length assured of Mary's love, he asked her mother's consent to their union; Mrs. Stewart frankly told him "She would commit her daughter's happiness to his keeping, provided there was no opposition offered by his father."

At first the old gentleman demurred; he persisted "that his son was too young to think of matrimony. Miss Stewart, though a very amiable young lady from all he had heard of her, was without fortune; not that he cared for it,"—and here the old gentleman slightly hesitated—"but he thought it better they should have something to begin the world with."

"Dear father, how often have I heard you say that you had but a few hundred dollars when my mother and you were married, and in my whole life I never heard either of you regret your want of fortune."

"True, true, but there are few women in the world like your mother. She was always happy at home, and no matter how fretted or anxious I might be through the day, I was always sure of a loving word and a pleasant smile in the evening. When I returned wearied and exhausted with the cares of business, she never pestered me to take her to some place of public amusement. I never came

home and found the house in disorder, and her away at a revival-meeting, or running after some popular preacher: yet she was a woman of deep piety, and showed it by doing her duty in that state of life into which it had pleased God to call her. No, no; there are few women like her; in the twenty years we lived together, I don't think there was an unkind feeling between us."

"But, dear father, Miss Stewart may be all that my mother was."

"I doubt it; girls are brought up very differently now-a-days; they dance, they sing, learn to play on the piano, dress, visit and coquette; Heaven help the man of moderate means who gets one of them for a wife."

"You forget, father, that Mary has not been brought up in such a manner; her mother, you know—"

"Yes, yes, I know Mrs. Stewart is a prudent woman, but what warrant have we that her daughter will be the same?"

"Dear father, if you but knew Mary. Why will you not go with me and see for yourself whether she is not worthy to be your daughter?"

"Certainly, if I saw with your eyes she would be most worthy; but it is no way to learn a woman's character by visiting her when she is prepared to receive you; I want to drop in at any time, and judge what she is at home. As I said before, if you were wealthy and could afford to indulge your wife in extravagance, it would be well enough; but you are not, so take my advice and give up the project."

"I must speak seriously on this matter; give it up I cannot; to marry without your consent I do not wish, neither would Mary, nor her mother, consent to anything of the kind."

"What's that? She would not run away, think you?"

"No, father, not even were I to urge it; Mary has too much firmness of principle wilfully to violate a known duty, that of obedience to parents."

"So, so, well, she may be a good girl after all; that is just like your mother; a good daughter will make a good wife, but I've no great opinion of the woman who proves her love for a man by forgetting to honor her father and mother. There's a great deal of false sentiment abroad in the world about such matters. When a girl runs away, and marries a man in opposition to the wishes of her parents, it is usual for people to talk of the sacrifices she has made, and the strength of her affection for her lover. Now the matter does not strike me in this light; on the contrary, I conceive it to be a most selfish and unfeeling act. The grief of a mother, who has hung over her cradle, nurtured her in her bosom, watched by her sick pillow, and borne with all her childish waywardness; and the disappointment of a father, who may have garnered his hopes of happiness in his child's obedience, are all flung to the winds; self-denial is too painful a task, and her own gratification is all the lady thinks about. And the man who could urge a woman to such a course, if his wife afterward carries out the lessons of disobedience and deception which he by that one act has taught her, and practice them upon himself, why should he blame her? I'd like to see this girl, who would not run away with you, and will take a walk there this evening."

William Clayton had gained his point; he was sure that if his father once became acquainted with Mrs. Stewart and her daughter his scruples would vanish.

The event justified his hopes, and a year saw Mary and himself united.

Years rolled by, and many wondered that William Clayton did not advance in the world. Other members of the legal profession, who had entered the arena with himself, rose step by step, built or rented fine houses, had them magnificently furnished, their families dressed expensively, and were received into fashionable society, while Mr. Clayton and his wife were scarcely known out of their small but select circle of personal friends.

"Why don't you dash out and make more show?" said a lady visitor who called one day on Mrs. Clayton; "if you always live in this plain, quiet manner, people will know nothing about you, and, depend upon it, unless you make a genteel appearance, the world will take little notice of you."

"I do not exactly know what you mean by a genteel appearance, there are so many different standards of gentility, but I am sure neither Mr. Clayton nor myself would ever submit to keep up a *false* appearance."

"Oh, I am as much opposed to false appearances as any one; but, for instance, if you were to take a larger house, and have it more fashionably furnished, and entertain more, you would be more thought of, and Mr. Clayton's practice might be enlarged; and this I am sure you could better afford than some others I could name of our acquaintance."

"It is a matter of little moment to us how others do, we must act as will be most prudent for ourselves. Mr. Clayton is not rich, nor will he ever be. When he commenced practice at the bar, it was with the firm determination never to undertake any case in which he was not fully convinced of his client's right to justice. He could not plead the cause of a bold, bad man, and, by some trifling

legal technicality, gain his suit, and 'make the worse appear the better reason.' No, I thank God, his energies are always employed on the side of right, in the cause of the widow, the orphan, and the destitute, though it must be confessed these are the persons who pay the smallest fees, and very often none at all."

"Bless me, what an eccentric man! But don't Mr. Clayton think he owes a duty to his family? There is Catharine will soon be old enough to be brought out, and I can tell Mr. Clayton he will have her long enough on his hands if he keeps her moped up in an old-fashioned house like this."

Mrs. Clayton smiled. "Certainly, Mr. Clayton knows there is a duty owing his family, but he does not think that duty consists in obtaining money at the expense of his conscience, and hoarding it up to buy a husband for his daughter. He is in no hurry to part with Catharine, but would rather she remainad under the paternal roof until her character was fully formed, and then he would wish to see her the beloved and honored wife of an estimable man, possessing habits of self-respect and self-reliance, rather than the fashionable lady, whose husband was the silly possessor of thousands."

"Why, how strangely you talk, Mrs. Clayton! I can't believe you think wealth of no value."

"I have not said that I thought it of no value; on the contrary, it is to be sought after as a means for supplying us with much that renders life desirable; and, above all, as the means under God of benefiting our fellow creatures. All I wish to convey is, that wealth is too much the end and aim of every exertion. The man of business toils for it, as the galley-slave at the oar, denying himself the need-

ful time for repose or recreation; and too often the endearments of home are sacrificed on the altar of Mammon."

"O, that is all very fine talk, but you can't make your way in the world without money; for my part, I hope Mr. Archer will drive business until he has amassed something handsome."

"But if your husband is from morning till night in his counting-room, and comes home with his brain filled with invoices, balance-sheets and ledgers, you lose, what appears to me the most valued and delightful, the society of your husband, and the leisure which might be devoted to intellectual enjoyment. Would it not be better to live in a smaller house, and in plainer style, on a more limited income, than to have your husband's whole time given to the tear and wear of toiling for money?"

"As to my husband's society, that makes little difference, for I am generally out, or engaged with company, when he comes home. The closer he attends to business the better, for I mean to ride in my coach as well as Susan Jones, who married Wilson. You remember her, don't you? We all went to school together at Mrs. Barclay's. Two years ago the Wilsons hired a house in Washington Square, and I was determined I would live no longer in White street. I found out where they were going to, and gave Mr. Archer no peace until he succeeded in getting one a few doors from them; so we auctioned off all our things, and, would you believe it? many of them brought no more than half what was paid for them, although they were all new the year before; but it couldn't be helped. Our new house is furnished in the most expensive manner, and next year we will have our carriage. Mr. Archer says I will ruin him, but I don't believe it, for I know he has

made some good speculations lately; bless me, it is nearly three o'clock, and I have a long walk to take yet to make a call on Mrs. Bishop. She is a sweet, fashionable lady, and I must time my visits there to a minute, her dearest friends would not be admitted if she were about to dress for dinner. Good-bye, my dear, what a pity that you don't visit in a fashionable circle," so saying, the giddy Mrs. Archer took her leave.

Mrs. Clayton could not help smiling while she took a retrospective view of the past. Sarah Grant, now Mrs. Archer, was, in their school days to which she had alluded, a pretty girl, with a great fondness for dress and show, and a large fund of animal spirits. At a ball she attracted the attention of Mr. Archer, a bachelor on the shady side of thirty, who thought it would be delightful to have such a young sprightly creature for a wife. "I cannot bear a dull prosy woman," said he one day to a bachelor friend; "I want something to amuse me when I return from the counting-room; and, besides, she is so young, I can train her as I wish." And with his head full of plans for his future training, Mr. Archer, who was neither remarkably good-looking, nor interesting, but who had the name of being a man well to do in the world, was married, after a short courtship, to the pretty Miss Grant. The honey moon was scarcely over when Mr. Archer began to feel he had been too precipitate, his pretty young wife would not train.

"Sarah, my dear, sing me that little Scotch ballad to-night; you never sing or play now as you did before we were married."

"Oh, I'm tired to death! I've been shopping and making calls to-day, and, besides, you always ask for such old-

fashioned ditties; I hate them!" In a few minutes the little lady added, "I thought you were coming home to take me to the opera to-night, and I hurried my life almost out to get through in time, and ordered a beautiful head-dress of silver tissue and marabouts, which has been home this hour."

"Why, my dear, I thought you were too much fatigued to use the least exertion, even to sing for me."

"Well, I am, but I could go there. I will wear my velvet mantilla thrown gracefully about my shoulders, and my new head dress; that will be delightful! You can get ready in a minute, you know. I bought myself a dozen pair of white kid gloves this afternoon; yours were not much soiled, and I thought they'd do well enough, people won't look so much at your hands as at mine."

"I cannot go to-night, Sarah," said Mr. Archer, with some severity of tone, "it is too late to procure tickets; and, besides, I am too much fatigued. You have been out every night for the last fortnight, and you might, I think, please me this once."

"That is always the way when I set my heart on going any place, I must sit and mope here with you."

The lady pouted, and grew more sullen every moment, until at last she left the room. Mr. Archer waited some time for her return, but in what is called "a fit of sulks" she had retired for the night, and left him to his own reflections. And these were bitter.

He had married a wilful, wayward, spoiled girl, whose education had been neglected to make room for showy, superficial accomplishments, who had been brought up with a love for display and extravagance; who was never happy but when surrounded by silly foplings ministering to

her vanity, and who regarded her husband as the last man in the world it was worth taking any trouble to please. Like many other men, who, when they have reached the meridian of life, think themselves far-seeing, and suppose that they cannot be deceived in their estimate of female character, Mr. Archer found that he had been short sighted in the extreme. He had been duped by an affectation of child-like simplicity, and amiability of manners, and he began to fear that he had been loved for his reputed wealth, and not for himself alone; his pretty wife would not train!

One more scene and we will leave them.

"My dear, I have been looking at a very airy and convenient house; it is in a pleasant situation, and I think the rent will suit us: we have been a long time boarding, and you know I never liked it."

"What is the rent of the house?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"Has it marble mantels and folding doors?"

"No, my dear, but it is large and airy, though not built in modern style, and I think it will answer very well."

"I shan't go to any house that hasn't marble mantels and folding-doors, that can be thrown open when I have company. There's Susan Jones has a beautiful house, with two elegant parlors with white marble mantels and folding-doors, and her husband is no better off than you are."

It was useless to remonstrate. Mr. Archer was weary of boarding, and longed for the quiet of a house of his own. He had often, while a bachelor, thought what luxury it would be to go home, put on his slippers, and seat himself, newspaper in hand, with a sort of Alexander Selkirk feeling, "I am monarch of all I survey," while his

wife with her own hands arranged the tea-table, and the evening closed with a book, or music, or a few choice friends. Alas! these bachelor dreamings of married comfort were dashed to the ground. His wife would not play for him alone, she disliked reading, her mind was wholly uncultivated, so that he often blushed when she spoke, and, worse than all, she would not train! All thought of the old-fashioned house was given up, and one at seven hundred dollars a year was rented in White Street, from which, as we have seen, the lady pestered her husband to remove into Washington Square. Poor Mr. Archer!

CHAPTER III.

TIME'S CHANGES.

More than a year had elapsed since the death of Mr. Clayton, and his widow still occupied the house endeared to her by so many hallowed associations. From the time of her marriage, Mrs. Clayton had made it an invariable rule to live within their income, and as the state of her husband's affairs was always known to her, she could regulate her household expenses accordingly. If a new article of dress or furniture was proposed, the first question asked was, "Can we afford it? can we pay for it now, or run in debt, and thus voluntarily place ourselves in a state of dependence, and lose our self-respect by so doing?" The answer invariably given was "No; these things can neither make us happier, nor wiser, nor better; we can wait for them."

By this mode of procedure, Mr. Clayton was enabled to lay by a small sum annually, which he invested in bank stock, so that at his death his wife and children were not left dependent on the charity of others. Let not the reader suppose that either Mr. Clayton or his wife were niggardly, far from it. He was a man of the most generous impulses, and his wife might have obtained anything she chose to ask; she was aware of this, and was only the more careful not to abuse his confidence. If she deprived herself of luxuries, it was because she knew they would be purchased by her husband's renewed toil and greater exertion, and to this her unselfish nature was decidedly opposed.

They had everything necessary for comfort, what should they wish for more? If there were times when the resolution of both husband and wife failed, it was when tempted by a new book, or an object of charity.

As we have said, Mrs. Clayton was still in her old home, faithfully devoting herself to the duties which had devolved upon her at the death of her husband. William had just returned to boarding-school, after spending the summer vacation with his mother and sisters. Amy was conning over her lesson, and Mrs. Clayton and Catharine were engaged in conversation.

"Your term at school has expired, and I fear, before commencing another, I shall be obliged to keep you at home a few days, Catharine."

"Dear mother, I am so glad to think you will allow me to stay; I was afraid to ask, although I saw you were looking pale; but you are so anxious that I should complete my education."

"I am anxious indeed, my love, because it is all the for-

tune I shall be able to give you, and I wish you to have resources of your own, on which to rely in time of need."

"Well, mother, you know I am now in my seventeenth year, and am only revising my studies, which I can do equally as well at home, with your assistance."

"I would have preferred your remaining at school, but just now it cannot be," and as Mrs. Clayton spoke she fell fainting into the arms of her daughter.

"Oh, mother, mother," cried little Amy, starting from her seat. "Oh, Catharine, how white she looks; she will die like father!"

"Hush, Amy, run and bring Sally." The little one flew out of the room and called the maid.

With the assistance of Sally, Mrs. Clayton was laid upon the sofa, her hands and face washed with cold water, and she slowly returned to consciousness, but not to health. For nine weeks she lay prostrated with a low nervous fever. At length she was convalescent; and sitting up, supported by pillows, she watched with tearful eye, and thankful heart, her devoted Catharine gliding about the room, and arranging everything for her comfort.

During her mother's illness she had never left the room, except to give some necessary directions, or to prepare some delicacy with her own hand, and she was rewarded by seeing her beloved parent restored to health, and able once more to take part in her domestic duties.

"You will not ask me to leave you, now that you are well again, dear mother; I am afraid if I were gone you might exert yourself too much, and bring on another attack of that dangerous fever."

"No, my daughter, your aid is invaluable, and I am afraid that we must soon devise some plan by which we

may be enabled to add to our resources. The expenses attending on my illness, you know, were so great that our interest was not sufficient to discharge them, and we have been obliged to break upon the principal; this will never do. As for Amy, you and I can educate her at home, but I cannot bear the thought of taking William from school. It was his father's wish that, after passing through college, he should study for the ministry, but the expense to be incurred is so great that I fear the wish can never be realized."

Catharine's countenance brightened, a happy thought had occurred to her. "Mother, if I could obtain a situation as governess, my salary might pay for William's tuition."

The mother kissed her daughter's cheek. "You forget, my dear, that I can hardly spare you from home, and, besides, you are too young to be received as a governess. It occurs to me that we might do something together, something which would not require a separation; what do you think of our making arrangements to take a few pupils?"

"Oh, that will be better still, then I can remain at home, and be always near when you want me."

"The grocer says this is a bad bill, ma'am," said the servant entering the room, and thereby interrupting the conversation. "I brought the things, and he says I can pay him the next time I go there."

"Mr. Briggs must be mistaken, it was a city bill I gave you."

"Yes, ma'am, so it is, but he says the bank broke yesterday, and it's not worth a cent."

Mrs. Clayton took the bill from the girl's hand and examined it; true enough, it was the same she had given her. "Sally, step over the way, and if Mr. Rodgers is at

home, ask him if he will be kind enough to come here for a few minutes; he is a bank director, and will know whether the rumor is true or false."

"He will be here in a minute, ma'am," said the girl, quickly returning, "I met him on the stoop, he was just going down town, but said he would come here first."

"Good morning, Mrs. Clayton."

"Good morning, sir. Can you tell me, Mr. Rodgers, whether the reports about the C— Bank are true or not? I sent one of the bills with my servant this morning, but it was refused, and they told her the bank was broke."

"I hope you have but little of that money, madam, for it is utterly worthless." Mrs. Clayton turned pale.

"So, so," said Mr. Rodgers, "this comes of not taking my advice; I told Clayton not to invest his money in that stock, but he would not heed me, and now see how it has turned out."

"Mr. Clayton did what he thought was for the best, sir."

"Yes, yes, I do not doubt it, my dear madam, but he should not have been so obstinate. Good morning, ladies," said the bank director, looking at his watch, "it is nearly ten o'clock, and it is time I was on my way to Wall street." He suspected that the widow's all was gone, and with some forebodings that if he stayed longer she might possibly want a loan, without security, he hurried from the house.

It was some time before either mother or daughter recovered from the shock. They were absolutely penniless; all the money they possessed being on the one broken bank.

Catharine was the first to rouse herself—"Mother, we

must obtain money to live upon until further arrangements are made; we might get credit for a time, but eventually the bills will have to be paid."

"I know it, my child, and there is half a year's rent due; Mr. Morris was out of town at the end of the last quarter, and the whole amount for six months is now lying in the house utterly worthless. God help us!"

"God will help us, dear mother; you have always relied upon him, and he will not now desert us."

"True, my child, he may see fit to try us, to bring distress upon us, but he will not forsake us in our extremity."

Mrs. Clayton was not the only one who suffered by the failure of the bank. There were mechanics, hard-working men, earning a subsistence for themselves and their families by the sweat of their brow—laborers, toiling like beasts of burden under the scorching summer sun, for a scanty pittance barely sufficient to provide them with the common necessaries of life—women, overtasked, emaciated women, plying with weary fingers their needles all day, and far into the solemn night, for employers who were battening on the life-current that ebbed from their breaking hearts—widows, who had treasured there the portion of their fatherless and helpless little ones—on all these was brought ruin and desolation. And what was the cause? Defalcation! And were the workers of this great wo punished? Were they pointed at with scorn? Were they frowned from society, where they festered like a moral pestilence, destroying all belief in integrity and honor? No! Society had not the moral courage to cast them off, or to brand their crimes with the dark names they deserved. No! they were courted, and caressed, and

their homes were the abodes of luxury, while the cries of their victims went up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth!

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOVERNESS.

All Mrs. Clayton's plans were frustrated. The house must be given up. The necessary arrangements were made as speedily as possible. Part of a small tenement was hired, and as much furniture as was absolutely necessary for housekeeping removed to it; the rest had been disposed of at auction. Sally was dismissed, or rather forced to go; her attachment to her mistress being so great that she entreated to remain at half her former wages. Even that half Mrs. Clayton found she could not promise, and the faithful creature was obliged to leave. There were no accommodations in their new home for the reception of pupils, so this favorite project was wholly abandoned, and they must now resort to some other means for procuring a livelihood.

Mrs. Clayton wished, if possible, to keep William at school; she could not bear the thought of taking him from his studies and placing him in some situation where they must be wholly neglected. Early trained herself to habits of self-denial, she was willing to make any sacrifice for her children.

From the death of her father, Catharine's native energy of character had been brought fully into action. She was

her mother's comforter, companion and friend, and often the widow thanked God for having given her such a child.

"Well, Catharine, which of these plans do you think best?" said Mrs. Clayton, after they had been for a long time talking over the past, and trying to think what was to be done for the future.

"Why, mother, if I could obtain a few young ladies to whom I might give lessons in music, I think I should like it better than anything else. I could go to their houses, and on my return assist you and teach Amy. Perhaps I might make more in this way than in any other, and you know it is what will bring most money that we want just now." Mrs. Clayton could not forbear a smile.

"How calculating you have grown, Catharine! one would hardly suppose you were the same girl who once thought money of no value, and gave away almost everything of your own to your playmates."

"And, dear mother, if I had the means I would do so now; but what was then mere generosity would, under our present circumstances, be thriftless prodigality. I do not believe I could ever become covetous or miserly; but I trust I shall be prudent and economical."

"But how are you to obtain those music pupils?"

"We can have circulars printed, and as the terms will be low, for I think it best to ask but ten dollars a quarter, I am sure I will soon have as many as I can attend to."

"Your plan is a good one, but don't be too sanguine, my dear, you may be disappointed; I do not say this to discourage you, but only to moderate your expectations."

The circulars were printed and distributed. A number were left at Mrs. Archer's, who had kept up a calling acquaintance with the Claytons while they remained in

their old home. True, they had not seen her since their removal, but that had taken place so recently that they were not surprised at her absence.

"I would not wonder if Mrs. Archer gave me her two girls for pupils; and she has such a large circle of acquaintances, that she may obtain a great many for me," said Catharine, the day after the circulars had been left at that lady's house.

"I do not know, my dear," said her mother. "Mrs. Archer is very fashionable, and prefers foreign music teachers for her daughters; but as she has always professed a friendship for us, perhaps she may influence some of her friends in your favor."

Day after day passed away in uncertainty—no applications were made—"but they might be to-morrow"—morrow after morrow came and went, bearing its heavy burden of disappointment, until at length Mrs. Clayton and her daughter sorrowfully felt that some other means must be adopted.

Catharine had never wholly abandoned her first favorite plan of being a governess, and again she spoke of it to her mother. "All I regret is that I cannot be at home with you every evening, dear mother; but upon the whole it will be better—my salary will be permanent, and I shall be at no expense whatever; and as I am fond of children, it will be a labor of love to me."

Mrs. Clayton sighed; she did not wish to part with the society of her child, but there was no alternative. "To-morrow, mother, I will look in the papers, and if there are any advertisements, I will make application immediately."

Catharine's eye ran eagerly over the list of Wants in the morning newspapers, and found no less than four ad-

vertisements for a governess. The advertisers all resided in different parts of the city and at great distances from each other; but distance was no obstacle, and she left home determined, if she could, to find a situation before her return. At the first place she called she was told they had already engaged a lady, who was coming that morning. She turned away somewhat disappointed, but as this was only one, and there were still three left, she would not allow herself to be discouraged. She had now a long walk before her, the day was sultry, and completely exhausted, she rang at the door of a large and fashionable looking house in the Fifth Avenue. After waiting a long time in the hall, the lady of the mansion made her appearance. Catharine rose and remained standing, while answering all her questions, while the lady herself placed one shoulder against the parlor door, and stood playing with the silk tassels of her embroidered apron, apparently forgetful that, by any possibility whatever, the young creature before her might be fatigued. At length her ladyship came to the point—she had three children—they were very young—and as she saw a great deal of company, she had no time to look after them herself. She wished the governess to take sole charge of the little ones—to wash and dress them—look after their clothes—take them out to walk—teach them their lessons, and in the evening after they had gone to bed, assist with the plain sewing of the family.

Catharine was astounded, and thought she must have made some mistake in reading the advertisement. Intimating that it was not the situation of children's maid, but of governess, that she sought, she took her leave. She had now to go to the lower part of the city. Her feet

were swollen with walking—her head was aching, and much as she grudged spending a solitary sixpence, she found it must be given for a ride in an omnibus. On reaching the house she was in quest of, and making known her errand, she was shown into a parlor, where a middle-aged lady, wearing an immense turban, was seated on a sofa. This lady received her very graciously, and began to extol the children for whom the governess was wanted. "They were little angels—there would be no trouble in the world in superintending their education—it would be a pleasure for any young lady to have them under her charge; would it not, my dear?" she added, turning and addressing a rather pretty languishing-looking woman, who was reclining on a divan, with a new book open before her. "I have not heard a word you were saying, mamma, I am so absorbed in Ernest Maltravers that I can think of nothing else; do, pray, arrange that matter without troubling me—it's the affair of the governess, I suppose?"

"My daughter is so nervous and so full of sweet sensibility, that common matters jar upon her delicate and susceptible nature; for this reason I take sole charge of her children. She can't bear to hear them cry, and her heart is so tender that she never can remain near them when they are ill; indeed she never sees them except when dressed to dance in a ballet; but her taste in those matters is so exquisite, that they are then submitted to her approval."

"How many children are there?" asked Catharine, wishing to direct the lady's attention to the object of her visit.

"Three, my dear—Adeliza, Ethelinda and Mortimer Grandison—the latter was named after Lord Mortimer in

the Children of the Abbey, (you've read the Children of the Abbey, havn't you ?) and Sir Charles Grandison."

"What salary do you propose giving, madam ?"

"Why, my dear," said the lady, drawing closer to Catharine, and assuming a confidential tone—"I don't think we will dispute about that."

Catharine's heart beat quickly—"how liberal !" she thought.

"You see, my dear, we don't want the governess to be like a stranger in the family. When she is not engaged with the children, she can sit in my room and read to me, and if she has a taste for making pretty nic-nacs, as most young ladies have, she can assist me in making fancy articles for the ladies' fairs. So you see it will be quite a home to her, and more than that she can have her washing done in the house."

"Well, madam, what will the salary be ?"

"Oh, child, I forgot; we will give fifty dollars a year into the bargain ! Now is not that something handsome ?"

"I believe, madam, I cannot accept the situation," said Catharine, rising.

"Not accept it ? Why, child, I never heard anything so absurd ! Remember, you get your washing into the bargain !"

"It will not suit me, I believe. Good morning." And with a heavy heart Catharine left the house.

One place still remained—fortunately it was not far off, and thither the weary girl bent her steps. It was outwardly a house of plainer pretensions than either of the others, but the interior was shining with vulgar finery. A dumpy woman, who tried to look consequential, made her appearance, and proceeded at once to business.

"So you've come to be taken as governess."

"I have come to ascertain whether the situation will suit me or not."

"Suit you! I dare say it will; there's but two children, for you see my husband was a widower when I married him, with two sons grown up young men; one's gone to sea, and the other's a clerk in Pearl street, but I suppose he'll go in business for himself next year. I aint got but two children of my own, as I told you, and I want them teached everything. They're both girls, and I don't intend keeping them in the back-ground, I can tell you. Of course you read what I wanted in the advertisement, and if you hadn't known how to teach all the branches, you wouldn't have come. There's been a good many here already, and my husband said I was too particular, I'd never be suited, but I told him this morning that I'd have one before he came home to-night, and I mean to stick to my word."

After some preliminary matters were talked over, Catharine ventured to inquire what was the salary? It was more than she had supposed would be offered, and she readily promised to be there on the following morning. With the prospect of a situation before her she could afford to spend another sixpence, and the omnibus soon whirled her near home. All that had taken place was soon related, and Mrs. Clayton could not forbear smiling when Catharine told her of the liberal offer of "fifty dollars a year and her washing into the bargain!"

The next day saw her installed in her new office of preceptress to two great, ungainly, ill-bred girls; who thought there could be no better sport than pinning rags and papers to the dress of the governess, sticking pins in her chair,

placing something in her way that she might stumble in the dark, with other such refined and lady-like amusements. The girls continued rude and untractable, while their mother, of course, blamed the governess, and was seldom civil to her, except when she expected company, and wished Catharine to entertain them by playing on the piano.

"Mirandy, why isn't your hair platted this morning?"

"What makes you say *platted*, ma? Governess says it's *plaited*."

"I'll teach your *governess*," (there was always great stress laid upon this latter word,) "I'll teach your governess to know better than to make you disobedient to your parents, finding fault with every word that comes out of my mouth; a pretty piece of business! Why isn't your hair platted, you minx?"

"Governess didn't attend to it this morning, and she wouldn't wash Hester Maria's face, neither."

This was a falsehood, and the girl knew it, but she hated Catharine for endeavoring to restrain her unruly habits, and did every thing in her power to annoy the sorely tried girl.

Poor Catharine! every day some new duty devolved upon her, which she had never thought of being asked to perform. But she bore all with unwearied patience. Her mother was toiling at home, and their earnest desire of keeping William at school, could only be accomplished by her remaining where she was. She had a high and holy mission to perform, and what cared she for self-sacrifice? But at last she was subjected to insult, and the libertine addresses of the clerk in Pearl street drove her back to the shelter of her mother's roof.

In a short time William, too, was there, and the widow and her children were wondering how and where they would find employment.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT WILL THE WORLD SAY?

"And so Mrs. Clinton has accepted your invitation," said Mr. Archer, as he strolled with an air of listlessness through his sumptuous apartments. Within the last year they had been thoroughly renovated. Italian artists had been employed in painting the ceilings, and Mr. Archer had received from Paris the newest and most costly style of furniture. Mrs. Archer had a beautiful boudoir fitted up with mirrors and rose-colored hangings, with antique chairs, and small inlaid tables.

"A perfect love of a place, with which Mrs. Clinton will be delighted!" said the little woman, who was fast losing all traces of the beauty which had captivated the bachelor heart of Mr. Archer.

Mrs. Archer had ascended step by step in the scale of society, and at each ascent had thrown off her old friends, as easily as one throws by an old glove. She had submitted to mortifications which any other woman with a particle of self-respect would never have endured. She had in turn been called upstart, *parvenue*, and many other opprobrious epithets; but her point had been carried, she had gained the *entrée* to the *court circles* of the *republic*, and she was satisfied—she was more than satisfied—she

was elated, enchanted, at the thought of having Mrs. Clinton for a guest!

"Havn't I managed it all nicely, my dear? No one will refuse our invitations now; no one *dare* after Mrs. Clinton has accepted. I'll tell you a secret; I got our Polly to ask Mrs. Clinton's maid 'who was her mistress's milliner?' And then I went to the same place, and found out that she had engaged a head-dress for Thursday evening, and I ordered one exactly like it, but of richer materials; won't she be surprised to see mine so much handsomer than her own?"

"My dear," said Mr. Archer, "would it not have been in better taste to have worn something plainer? No lady should try to outshine her guests."

"What old fashioned notions! This comes of your staying at home so much, Mr. Archer; if you'd been as much in society as I have, you'd know that every lady wears the best and costliest she can afford."

"Can *get*, you mean, my dear," said her husband drily. "Whether she can afford it, is quite another matter."

"How ridiculous!" And Mrs. Archer, forgetting her assumed lady-like deportment, flounced out of the room. Uuwilling to trust her own taste, and determined on making the party a splendid affair, Mrs. Archer hired a number of colored waiters—"who," she said, "were used to such things, for they had waited in some of the first houses; indeed, she couldn't tell but they had been at Mrs. Clinton's."

To one of these she gave *carte blanche* as to expense, and to the others positive orders to follow his directions, particularly regarding the arrangement of the supper table.

The appointed evening came—carriage after carriage rolled up, deposited its burthen of finery and fashion, and then passed on in an opposite direction.

Mrs. Clinton and her daughter Julia were there, and it was the principal part of Mrs. Archer's employment during the evening to point them out and introduce them to her guests.

If profusion without taste be a sign of gentility or fashion, then was Mrs. Archer's party the most genteel and the most fashionable given during the season.

"And now," said the good lady, in a tone of exultation to her husband, as he sat the next morning, with the air of a martyr, in the untidy breakfast parlor—"now that this has gone off so well, on Laura Matilda's birthday I shall give a fancy ball; she shall be dressed as a shepherdess, and I will contrive that the divine count who was here last night, shall attend her as a shepherd boy, with a crook. Maria Theresa shall be a queen, and wear a dress exactly like the one worn by Queen Victoria on the day of her coronation. I shouldn't wonder if the girl did one day become a princess, she has such a stately way with her, and carries her head so haughtily." Mr. Archer sighed and muttered something that sounded very like "fool," but his wife heeded not; she was no sooner done with one folly than she meditated another, and now this new crotchet of the fancy ball had whole possession of her thoughts.

"My dear," said her husband after a pause, "why do you not ask Catharine Clayton to your parties? she is quite as accomplished, and has far more refinement of manner, than many of the butterflies that flit about you. Her father I always respected, and her mother is a most estimable woman; and if Catharine could be brought to fancy

our girls, her society would be a great advantage to them."

"Why how you talk, Mr. Archer! you know I could never introduce such a nobody as Catharine Clayton to our fashionable friends. When they would ask 'Who is she?' what under heaven should I answer? I could not say that her father was some great man, nor that she was niece to Mr. so-and-so, member of Congress; not even her grandfather could be dragged in to support her claims to good society. I could not pass her off for a city heiress, for there's not one but either Ned Parker or young Thompkins has them on their list; people would take her for an humble companion, introduced on purpose to insult my guests."

"Good heavens! woman," said Mr. Archer, roused from his usual apathy, "I believe you have not one particle of common sense! Have you lost all self-respect, and become a mere puppet in the hands of a set of empty-headed jackasses? Not dare to maintain your own dignity and independence in your own house? Not dare to ask the daughter of an old friend, for fear of the remarks of a few trumpery misses, who might bless their stars if they were half as wise or half as good as Catharine Clayton."

Mrs. Archer was petrified. She had not heard such a burst from her husband since they were married, or rather, since he first found out she would not train. His words, however, produced some uneasy thoughts, and she resolved in a fit of heroics, to ask Catharine some day when she was sure there would be no other company; or, if visitors should accidentally drop in, she was not bound to introduce her; at any rate, she could manage to receive them in one parlor, while Catharine might remain unnoticed

in another. Thus did this silly woman give up her independence of thought and action—thus did she sell herself body and soul to the god of this world, rather than be thought unfashionable. No wonder that she forgot her resolution concerning Catharine, and soon lost all trace of the Claytons.

Let us leave her for awhile, and listen to the remarks of some of her late guests.

"I wonder what the vulgar Mrs. Archer will attempt next? I have no patience with the woman!" exclaimed, in no very gentle tone, a lady who had glided about a perfect sylph at Mrs. Archer's, and who had spoken in a lisp so low, that the gentlemen were obliged to bow their heads to hear her. "She is well enough in her way, if she would remain with her own set; but with such a broad red face, and fussy manner, she appears perfectly ridiculous, among well-bred people."

"Then why do you visit there, Laura?" said the lady's mother.

"O, like many others, I go in search of amusement, mamma; we sometimes quiz her to her face, and she is such a fool that she cannot perceive it. Of all the women I ever saw, she is the most susceptible of flattery. But that one is sure of meeting agreeable people there, I would never enter her doors. A few of us have formed a clique, and, without her knowing it, she is completely under our *surveillance*, so that she dare not ask any one she thinks would annoy us. As her rooms are large, and her refreshments the best that money can procure, (though to own the truth they are but vilely served,) we generally contrive to while away an evening agreeably enough."

"Ma," said Julia Clinton, "why do you accept an in-

vitation to Mrs. Archer's? Such people are certainly beneath our notice."

"Julia!" said her mother, deprecatingly. Julia blushed. "Have I not told you that such sentiments are unbecoming, unwomanly—none of God's creatures are beneath our notice. I grant you, that in the eyes of some, Mrs. Archer's position in a social point of view is inferior to our own; but in a country like ours, where there are such constant changes, these arbitrary distinctions cannot be long kept up. A reverse of fortune may humble the proudest, and a lucky speculation exalt the lowliest. I fear that, with all our boasting about liberty and equality, and all our railing against the privileged and titled classes of the old world, if a privileged order were to spring up here, our worthy republicans would strain every nerve to gain a patent of nobility."

"But Mrs. Archer is so vulgar."

"Are there no vulgar ladies in the circle of our acquaintance, my daughter? and why should we visit them? I went to Mrs. Archer's because I knew it would gratify her—because I had no right to play the exclusive with her any more than with others who are on our visiting list; and, above all, because I knew many would be there who would have made sport of her mortification, had I refused her invitation."

"But what will the world say, ma, when they hear you are on visiting terms with Mrs. Archer?"

"That is rather a comprehensive phrase, Julia—who do you mean by the world?"

"Why, all the people we know," said Julia, who, like many young persons, thought her own set comprised the whole world.

"My dear, there is a very trite and true saying, that 'We cannot please everybody.' I would not have you set public opinion at defiance, by acting in a manner truly censurable; but when you are fully convinced of the purity of your intentions, and the loftiness of your purpose, I would have you to act fearlessly without stopping to ask, 'What will the world say?'"

CHAPTER VI.

A PEEP AT POVERTY.

"I CAN give no more," said a dark looking man with a keen black eye, in a gruff voice, to a young girl who stood before him at the counter—"I can give no more, I tell you. Why, at our last yearly sale, there were far handsomer ones than this, sold for less than would pay for storage." And he turned in his hand an old-fashioned silver tea urn.

"If you could advance a little more; just a little—even fifty cents would be of service."

"I can't, I tell you; and if it don't suit you to leave it, you can take it away and try to make a better bargain."

The young girl stood as if irresolute, and a half suppressed groan escaped her.

"I do not like to go anywhere else, and I believe I must take what you offer."

Had not the man's heart been hard as the impenetrable adamant, he would have relented—his purse-strings would

have opened. But, no! he was accustomed to misery in every form—his doors had been darkened by the most squalid wretchedness—his walls had echoed the groans of bleeding and breaking hearts—his shelves had been the receptacles of early love, the ring, the locket, the brooch —of desecrated household gods, the Lares and Penates of once happy homes, parted with in an hour of agony, to gain a scanty pittance wherewith to feed a little longer the flame of life which burned with fitful lustre in the hollow eye. He stood amid these wrecks of human happiness, an incarnate Moloch, heeding the pleadings of the poverty-stricken, as little as heeds the fiery Juggernaut the groanings of the wretched victims crushed beneath his car.

The young girl stepped out into the dark street, and the door of the pawnbroker was closed behind her. The evening was cold, and a heavy snow had fallen. The girl hurried on, wrapping a light shawl closely round her slender figure. Many a sleigh, with its merry bells tinkling, and its gay groups dressed in furs, flew past her, and many a well-dressed pedestrian, booted and cloaked, wondered at the young girl's imprudence in venturing out on such a night so thinly clad. She heeded none of them, but hurried on toward the outskirts of the city. When passing a baker's window, spread with dainty cakes, she saw a wretched looking man enter the door. In a moment he came out, and joined a woman and two little girls, who were shivering in the cold. In his hand he held two rusk. One of these he divided between the children, from the other he broke a small piece and gave the rest to his wife. The woman raised it to her lips, took one mouthful, looked at her children, and broke it between them! Tears gushed from the young girl's eyes. "O,

for the cost of one sleigh-ride! O, for what will be paid by one party to-night for refreshments!" she mentally exclaimed. She stepped up close by one of the children, stooped, and put two shillings in her hand.

"God of the destitute, protect them," said the thinly-clad girl, as she hastened away. On she went, a long and dreary walk through the drifting snow, until at length she paused before a low wooden paling, and opening a small gate, ascended seven or eight broken steps in the side of a bank of earth, one part of which had been dug away. On the top of the ascent was a dilapidated frame building, with a ricketty wooden stoop, which had half fallen down, and was supported by a rude beam of decayed wood. There were one or two shutters to the lower windows, but the hinges were cracked and broken, and they creaked in the wind as if imploring to be taken from their crazy and precarious position. In the shattered panes fluttered various fragments of old garments, like flags of defiance flung out in the very face of the storm. It was altogether vile and ruinous in appearance. Who did it shelter from the blast? Who were the inmates of this wretched abode?

The young girl softly entered the house and was groping her way along the dark passage, when the door of a room was violently thrown open, and a rude, vulgar, slip-shod woman made her appearance, followed by a set of noisy children. "So, it's you, Miss, is it? A pretty time of night this for a decent young woman to be out of her own house—Andrew Jackson, if you don't quit hollerin when I'm a talking, I'll skin you alive; look at Henry Clay, how nicely he behaves himself. O, yes, Miss, you needn't try to git apast me, and sneak off in that manner." Here

she was interrupted by a scream—"Confound the brats! Mandy, go and pull Andrew Jackson from that ere cradle; he's a plaguing Ann Caroline to death—yes, Miss, you shan't git apast till I give you a piece of my mind. I warned your mother a week ago, that she must look out for another place. Instead o' paying of me in advance she owes two weeks already, though it was a dead loss when I rented the room to her for ten shillin a week. Now I shan't submit to be imposed on no longer. Mr. Higgins has been too easy with you, but I'll let him see that I'll be mistress in my own house, and not have it filled with such trumpery; folks that feel themselves too good to come and sit sociably with a body, and yet go strolling about the streets o' nights. Why, my Amandy might be ruin'd for aught as I know. Now you may go and tell your mother what I've said. I give you fair warning this time." Slamming to the door when she had ended her harangue, she left the young girl once more in the dark, who, feeling her way by the broken baluster, ascended the stairs and entered a room in the second story. The furniture was scanty, but scrupulously clean, and neatly arranged. In one corner was a bed, and on the hearth stood a furnace, with some charcoal burning in it.

"How long you have been absent, my child," said a woman, in a low voice, who was sitting at a small table, sewing on coarse check shirts. "I fear you have caught cold being out in this storm; your feet must be quite wet; sit down here," continued she, placing a chair beside the furnace. "Sit down here, my love, until I get you some dry clothing; here is some water I have kept warm, that you might bathe your feet, and a bowl of nice

gruel which only boiled a minute or two before you came in."

"Dear mother, you are so anxious; I am quite warm, and a little damp will not hurt me in the least, let me tell you—"

"I will hear nothing until you have done as I desire; your health is of more consequence than anything else, and a few simple precautions may save you a severe cold, or perhaps a fit of illness."

Tears started to the young girl's eyes at the total forgetfulness of self which her mother exhibited, who she knew had been waiting anxiously to hear the result of her errand. She obeyed quietly and in silence, as her eye wandered to the little table her mother had just left. A child sat by it; on its upraised leaf her arms were folded, and her young head, covered with a profusion of light shining curls, drooped heavily upon them. Her face was concealed, but her motionless posture and light regular breathing told that she slept. A map she had been coloring, and on which a boundary line was partly traced, lay open before her.

"Poor Amy! how weary she seems," said her sister in a whisper.

"Yes, weary, indeed," replied her mother. "I wished her to leave off, but she had tasked herself, and thought she would have finished before your return. I was glad when the poor child fell asleep, that she might have a short respite from her labors. And now tell me, my love, how you have succeeded."

"Not very well, mother; I could get but four dollars on the urn."

"But four dollars!"

"That is all; and although I felt ashamed to ask for more, yet I did, and pleaded for even fifty cents. O, mother, this is—"

"Mortifying, you would say, Catharine. I know it, and I grieve that we are under the terrible necessity of exposing ourselves in this manner, and to such people. I heard our landlady's voice, too, when you came in, and thought she was speaking to you; but I was afraid of waking Amy, and did not go down."

"Yes, mother, she stopped me to say that we could stay no longer without paying the rent; you know it is twenty shillings, and if we take it out of these four dollars, what are we to do? and—mother—it is not all here."

"That is unfortunate, indeed; how did you lose it?"

"I did not lose it, mother; but I could not help giving it—" and Catharine related the incident that occurred before the baker's shop.

"You did right, my child; they were more destitute than we."

Catharine's eyes sparkled when she heard her mother's approval. Their extreme poverty was forgotten; for a moment she even felt rich, as she glanced around their tidy apartment, and thought of the homeless, supperless children of the poor wayfarer. She thought it

> . . . . . No sin
> Against the law of love, to measure lots
> With less distinguished than ourselves; that thus
> We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
> And sympathize with others suffering more."

"I would not care how soon we left this wretched house," resumed Mrs. Clayton, "if we had the means of providing

ourselves with another; come what will, the rent must be paid, if we expect to be treated with civility. There will still be twelve—no—ten shillings left; there is something owing to both Amy and yourself for coloring prints and maps, and perhaps the lady for whom you marked the embroiderd handkerchiefs will pay you to-morrow. It is but a miserable pittance I get for making these shirts, and my eye-sight is so bad that I cannot undertake finer work. William, too, has received none of his scanty wages for the last three months."

Both mother and daughter sat for a long time absorbed in thought. They were poor and friendless, but not desponding, and when Amy woke from her slumber, the three knelt together, and the mother thanked God for having preserved them hitherto, and prayed him to aid and succor them, if there were darker days yet in store.

CHAPTER VII.

A RAY OF LIGHT.

THREE years, three weary years, had passed since Catharine Clayton, harassed and indignant, had left her situation as governess. She had toiled on, assisting her mother, but their united efforts eked out by the wages of William, who had succeeded in obtaining a place in a store, and of Amy, who had been taught to color maps, and thus added a little to the general fund, could not keep them from want. They had removed from place to place, descending gradually until they were obliged to occupy their present apart-

ments, at ten shillings a week, and even this they were no longer able to pay.

"Well, Catharine, has the lady paid you for marking those embroidered handkerchiefs?"

"No, mother, she was at a ball last night, and I suppose did not rise so early as usual this morning."

"Why, it is twelve o'clock!"

"Yes, but it was not more than eleven when I was there. I stopped on my way home to see William. A paper lay on the counter, and as my eye glanced over it, I saw an advertisement for a governess, and with your permission, mother, will make inquiries about the situation."

Mrs. Clayton thought of all her daughter had formerly been subjected to. "I am afraid of letting you go from me again, my child, and I would rather try and devise some other means for our support."

"Mother, I can think of none. We have toiled day and night, and our scanty remuneration is withheld until we are weary of asking. That very woman at whose house I called this morning, has twice before sent me away with the most frivolous excuses. O, if the rich knew the anguish of heart with which the poor turn away unpaid—if they knew how precious is that time which they think can be squandered away in repeated calls for the wages of honest toil—they would not—they could not, be so heartless!"

"But it is because they do not know these things, that they have no sympathy. The lady who employs a seamstress, and urges her to have the work finished at some given time, never dreams of the privation to which the poor girl may be subjected for want of the money for which she has toiled with sunken eye and weary frame. And how should the rich know this? Pampered with every luxury,

their slightest wishes gratified, how should they know what it is to work and wait? How can the woman who pays freely twenty-five dollars for an embroidered pocket-handkerchief, attach any value to the paltry twenty-five cents she contracted to pay for marking it? But let us not be too harsh in our judgments; prosperity has its quicksands as well as adversity, and after a few short years, the poor as well as the rich will have one common resting-place."

"Mother, if you have no objections I will go to-day and see about the situation; I am older now than when I last set out on such a quest, and I believe have more insight into character."

"Your dress, I fear, my child, will be but little in your favor; some people are strongly biased in their estimation of others by their personal appearance, and your costume, Catharine, is not very prepossessing."

"I know it, mother, but I am willing to run the risk, and, if need be, submit to a refusal. Be assured I have too much self-respect to feel ashamed merely on account of the plainness of my apparel, and no lady of discernment will regard that alone as her only test of character."

"Go then, and may the Protector of the fatherless go with you."

Catharine Clayton, though only twenty years of age, had lost much of the roundness of form and the elastic step of youth. Her countenance had assumed a grave and thoughtful expression, which made her appear much older than she really was; and a common observer would have passed her by without seeing anything very remarkable in her appearance—but those accustomed to study and discriminate human character, who looked upon her intellectual face, and mildly eloquent eyes, would at once have pro-

nounced her no common character. It must be confessed that it was with a nervous trepidation entirely at variance with her usual habits of self-command, that she rang the bell at the door of an elegant looking house in Waverley Place. She had so much at stake !—the welfare of those beloved ones who had now little part in life's heritage, save—

. . . . . "The common air,
And common use of their own limbs"—

those beloved ones who had been so thoughtlessly jostled aside on the highway of the world, until the place of their sojourn was unknown, perhaps their very existence forgotten, by their former associates !

The apartment into which Catharine was shown was superbly furnished, but what immediately attracted her notice were the various specimens of art, arranged with the utmost taste, with which it was adorned. She had risen to examine more closely a cabinet picture of exquisite grace and beauty, a copy of the celebrated violin player of Rafaelle, one of those inimitable creations, the beauty of which, once seen, haunts us for a life-time, when she heard the door open, and the lady of the mansion entered the room. She gave one searching look at her visitor, which sent the blood rushing to the face of the young girl, but in a moment her eyes were withdrawn, and, with a courteous and kind manner, she asked Catharine to be seated.

"You wish to obtain a situation as governess, I believe ?"

"Yes, madam, I saw an advertisement in the paper this morning—governess for two little girls ?" she said inquiringly.

"Yes, for my two youngest children, who are eight and ten years of age; the young lady who last had charge of them was obliged to leave on account of ill-health. I regretted to part with her, for she was a most amiable person, and the children were greatly attached to her. Have you resided in any family as governess?"

"One only."

"Was it lately?"

"No, it is three years since."

"Were you long there?"

"Three months."

"That was a short time—may I ask why you remained no longer?"

"I could not, it was the first time I had left home—and—" Catharine hesitated. She was ashamed to ackowledge, as is every woman of fine feeling, that she had been subjected to insult.

"I do not wish to press you to tell me why you left; I dare say you had sufficient reason for so doing. Are you now at home?"

"Yes, my mother is a widow, and two other children beside myself are with her," and the poor girl's lip quivered as she thought of little Amy, bowed down over her maps. Without pretending to notice her emotion, the lady asked if she thought herself competent to teach the English branches, with music and French, as these were all to which she wished a governess to devote her attention. Catharine replied in the affirmative.

"Then I shall call and see your mother to-morrow, when we will arrange the terms."

Here was a new embarassment. Would the lady take her after seeing where she lived? What if that horrid

Mrs. Higgins with her young brood of unmanageables should be in the way? But there was no use in conjecturing, and too upright to prevaricate or use any subterfuge, however harmless it might appear, Catharine gave her name, and the directions to find her mother's dwelling.

The lady rightly suspected that the family she was about to visit must be very destitute, and being a woman of fine feeling, and possessing a large share of consideration for others, she was not willing to subject one who might be the future teacher and companion of her children, to the invidious remarks of servants; so, instead of ordering her carriage, she set out on foot for the home of Mrs. Clayton.

The abodes of poverty were not unknown to her. Often had she been the angel of mercy to the suffering and the destitute. Early left a widow, with an ample fortune at her control, she felt that she was but the steward of the Almighty's bounty, and that at the dread day of judgment she must render an account of her stewardship. Belonging to one of the oldest and most wealthy families in a Southern State, highly intellectual and accomplished, her society was courted, and her presence coveted, in the most select circles. Equally removed from fanaticism on the one hand, and slavery to the world on the other, she enjoyed her Christian liberty, which allowed her to partake of all innocent recreation, while at the same time it restrained her from spending that time which God had given to fit her for eternity, in idle extravagance, or a silly devotion to the caprices of fashion. Watching over her children, and the different members of her household, with the strict watchfulness and gentle love of one who cared not only for their bodies, but their souls, she was yet devoid of all affectation of piety; and those who saw her

cheerful and unconstrained manner, and listened to the brilliant flow of her conversation, welling up from the depths of a cultivated and richly-stored mind, could scarcely believe that she was the same woman who, on every Lord's day, joined so devoutly in the worship of the sanctuary, or that that rich voice had fallen softly as the murmur of a summer fount on many a parched and weary heart. She was, in truth,

"A perfect woman, nobly plann'd."

We have met Mrs. Clinton once before, on her return from Mrs. Archer's party, and we gladly accompany her now on her visit to the Claytons.

To the delight of Catharine, Mr. Higgins had that morning consented to take his wife and children on a sleigh-ride to Harlem. Such crying and screaming were never heard, such a perfect bedlam was never seen. Andrew Jackson was running about with his hair on end, while his mother was ordering him to be quiet, and behave like a gentleman.

"I'll never be able to make anything genteel out o' you in the world. I thought I shouldn't when your father insisted on giving you that name of yourn. I told him no good would come of it, for the Locofocos were all a low set; look at Henry Clay there, *he* behaves like a gentleman."

At last, after every chest had been rummaged for stray garments, and two stools carried to the door for Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson to sit upon, Mr. Higgins made his appearance, and with Mrs. Higgins (who held the baby on her lap) beside him, and Mandy squeezed between them on the only seat, and the young Whig and Locofoco placed

side by side, with some appearance of amicability, the party set out.

Catharine was glad when she saw them drive from the door. Mrs. Clinton soon after reached the house, and a slight blush suffused the poor girl's cheek as she opened the door for her visitor. One glance around the apartment into which she entered convinced Mrs. Clinton that she was among superior people. True, there was poverty, but none of its usual squalid and untidy accompaniments. Mrs. Clayton, though dressed in garments of coarse material, and plain fashion, had an easy self-possession, a dignity of demeanor, and a polished address, which commended her to the taste, as well as to the kind feeling, of the noble woman with whom she was conversing. With the utmost delicacy Mrs. Clinton drew from the widow the story of her bereavement, and learned also the cause of Catharine's remaining but three months as a governess.

"I intended taking your daughter home with me to-day, Mrs. Clayton, but there may be some arrangements you would like to make before her leaving you, and, as I have every reason to feel assured that I shall be pleased with Catharine, I leave with her the first half year's salary."

Mrs. Clayton fully understood the delicacy which prompted the offer, and her heart swelled with emotion. At last one true woman had been found to whom she could commit her eldest darling, without fear of her being subjected to vulgar caprice, or licentious insult.

The mother's heart was glad, and from it, as from an altar, the mother's grateful thanks arose like sweet incense to the throne of Him who bringeth light out of darkness, and maketh streams of consolation to spring up like waters in the desert.

The first thing done by the Claytons was to provide themselves with a new home. They succeeded in finding the upper part of a neat, but plain house, to which they removed immediately. One cart held all the heavier articles of furniture, and the lighter ones were carried by William and his sisters. They had been fortunate enough to meet with a quiet, neat family, and the tidy appearance of the place, forming a strong contrast to the unswept and unwashed house of Mrs. Higgins, was truly charming.

Catharine was soon installed in her office of governess over two lovely, sweet-tempered girls, the elder of whom, both in person and manner, greatly resembled her sister Amy. What a change in one short month had been effected by the generous hand and the kind heart of one noble woman! A whole family, apparently on the brink of destitution, had been raised from sorrow to joy, from the gloomy depths of poverty, from the carking cares of cruel want, to the cheerful light of competence.

O, for more Mrs. Clintons! O, that more possessors of thousands would learn like her the luxury of doing good.

CHAPTER VIII.

PLANS AND PROJECTS.

"Now, my daughters, see that you acquit yourselves handsomely to-night; after all the money that has been spent upon your education, it would be too bad if you did not appear to as good an advantage as other people.

Laura Matilda, don't laugh so loud, you know Lord Chesterfield says it's vulgar; and you, Maria Teresa, don't jump quite so high when you are dancing, a lady you know should move easily and gracefully, and don't forget to keep your eyes open and see how things are managed at Mrs. Clinton's. You know she belongs to the *élite*, and as this is your first visit to her, I dare say you can learn a great deal if you are only on the look out." Such were Mrs. Archer's instructions to her daughters as they were dressing to spend an evening at Mrs. Clinton's, whither the divine count was to accompany them.

A young lady was crossing the hall as the party entered Mrs. Clinton's house, at sight of whom the sisters started as if they had beheld an apparition, and began whispering to each other. "Stop until I ask the servant who she is," said one, "let us find out what situation she holds about the house."

"Yes, do ask," said the other, "you know they were awfully poor, and I would not for the world have Mrs. Clinton suppose we ever visited such people."

Having ascertained that the object of their inquiry was the governess, the young ladies at once determined that if by any chance they met her during the evening, they would treat her as a perfect stranger, an individual too utterly insignificant to be noticed by them.

They were not a little surprised when, on entering the parlor, the first person they saw was Catharine Clayton, the governess; the young ladies swept past her without deigning a glance, and almost flew to the other side of the room, where Mrs. Clinton and her daughter were standing, protesting, in the most elaborate terms, how delighted they were at seeing their hostess and the lovely Julia

looking so well. Catharine stood for a moment confounded by their conduct—girls she had known so intimately, to act in such an absurd manner! But her self-possession, and with it her self-respect, returned in a moment. Mrs. Clinton had seen the whole procedure, and knowing on what terms Mrs. Archer and her daughters had formerly been with the Claytons, felt strongly indignant; but the silly worldlings were her guests, and, as such, were entitled to her polite attention.

There was one gentleman of the party who shared the devotion of the sisters almost equally with the count, and they were determined on ferreting out who and what he was. Finding an opportunity in the course of the evening of addressing Julia Clinton alone, Maria Teresa asked if Mr. Lester were not a clergyman: adding, she thought so, because he had such a grave and dignified appearance.

"No, he is not."

"O, I suppose he is a gentleman of fortune, travelling through this country, or, perhaps, a nobleman? he has certainly an air *distingué*."

"Edward Lester is a classical teacher in one of our large schools."

The young ladies were crest-fallen. All their politeness, all their winning airs and graces, all their battery of side glances, lisping accents, fan flirtations, had been lost on a schoolmaster! The thing was too preposterous! And, lest he might have the audacity to presume a little after those innocent encouragements, and, perhaps, to call upon them, they determined on being uncivil to him during the rest of the evening.

The sisters had ended their third duet, and left the piano, when the count, released for a moment from his

attendance upon Laura Matilda, addressed himself to Catharine in a mixture of French and broken English.

"Chantez vous, Mademoiselle? Ah, pardon, voulez vous chantez for de ladies?"

"I seldom sing, sir," said Catharine, who had heard the count speak very plain English once during the evening, while a little warm on the merits of a favorite racer.

"Ah, vous nous chantez pas—quelle pitié!—mais—but—you do dance—ah, oui, vous dancez—you valtze?"

"I do not waltz."

"Non! ah, well, mais, you moost speak de Italian."

"I read, but do not speak Italian."

"Ah, mon dieu! pourquoi vouz ne parlez l'Italian, all de young ladi speak de Italian." And without waiting for a reply to his last question, the count abruptly ended the conversation, shrugged his shoulders, and seated himself by the Archers.

"Dat young ladi, Miss, vat you call her? elle est very pretty, mais elle—she is not accomplished."

Laura Matilda whispered behind her fan, the count shrugged his shoulders higher than before, twirled his mustache, and darted a very significant look at Catharine, as much as to say, "I know who you are, and don't wonder that you neither sing, nor waltz, nor speak Italian." Catharine smiled, and quietly pursued the conversation with Lester, which had been interrupted by the impertinent inquiries of the count. The Misses Archer displayed their high breeding during the evening, by treating the governess with silent contempt, tittering audibly when she received attentions from any of the gentlemen, and talking very loudly in French instead of English.

On their return home they were eagerly questioned by their mother as to the occurrences of the evening.

"La, ma," said Laura Matilda, "I don't believe Mrs. Clinton is any great things after all; only to think of her keeping company with schoolmasters, and allowing the governess to remain in the parlor when there was company present."

"You know, my dear, Mrs. Clinton can afford to condescend; people know perfectly well who she is; and she acts with entire independence in all matters. I hope you were civil to those people, meeting them as you did at her house, although anywhere else I would not have you take the least notice of them."

"Indeed, ma, we did not speak to Catharine Clayton at all; and as soon as we found out that Mr. Lester was a schoolmaster, we left him to be entertained by the governess, who was a far more suitable companion for him than we were."

"What did you say his name was?"

"Lester."

"Why, I shouldn't wonder if it was the same person Mrs. Kingsland told me about to-day, and if what she says be true, I'm sorry you did not play your cards better, and treat him more politely."

"Why, what did she say, ma?"

"Oh, she told me a long story about a gentleman who came here from England—"

"Lester is English; I found that out," said Maria Teresa, interrupting her mother.

"Who came here from England," resumed Mrs. Archer, "a few years ago; that he was the second son of an immensely wealthy family and that his father wished him to

enter either the army or the church; this the young man refused, saying he disliked the army, and would never desecrate the church by using the holy office of a deacon, for which he felt himself unqualified, as the stepping-stone to preferment; and so, after some angry words from his father, and provoking taunts from his brother, he left home and came to the United States, and was now in New York, employed as a classical teacher in Mr. Elwood's Academy."

"But how came she to know all this, ma?"

"Why, Mrs. Dashwood, who arrived in the last steamer, told her the whole story, and Mrs. Kingsland says it may be relied upon, for that Mrs. D., while in England, spent a few days with Lester's aunt, a lady of distinction; but that is not all, he is entitled to a large fortune at the death of his grandfather, who is old and infirm, and who wishes his grandson to return to England. Edward Lester, Mrs. Kingsland calls him."

"Yes, sure enough, his name's Edward, for I heard Julia Clinton call him so."

"What fools you were, girls, to act as you did. He's sure of the fortune from his grandfather, and if his father and his brother die, he succeeds to a title; now, if you had but played your cards well, both of you might have married titles! Only think of it! What would Susan Jones say then, with her six ugly daughters on hand, any one of whom would be thankful for an offer?"

"Well, ma," said Laura Matilda, for whom all this was more particularly meant, "well ma, can't we manage to ask him here, and make up for it all? You know my birth-day comes next month, when we are to have the fancy ball; and you know, too, that I am to be a shepherdess;

now, as the count, is almost as good as engaged to Moll, I shall not dare ask him to be my attendant shepherd, so I shall contrive to get Lester. Let me alone for managing. I shall be on the look out for him in Broadway. Oh, let me alone, I'll nod my head very gracefully, and smile very sweetly, so as to show my teeth, which you often say, ma, are the prettiest things about me. I know the secret of catching the beaux; every man has vanity, and likes to receive attentions from a girl of spirit and fashion; and I dare say Mr. Edward Lester will be as well pleased as any one to be saluted in Broadway by the belle of Washington Place."

Mrs. Archer, forgetting all the admonitions of Lord Chesterfield, laughed outright at the sallies of her daughter, and began to speculate upon the probability of having both weddings come off at once, and the *éclat* that would attend them.

The second day after this conversation, as the carriage of the Archers was slowly passing through the upper part of the city, Laura Matilda espied the schoolmaster. She nodded, but he did not heed her. This was too bad, but the lady was not easily daunted, and putting her head out of the window she bowed, and smiled—"Good morning, Mr. Lester"—her hand was on the check-string, "when he stops, I will ask him to take a drive with us—good morning, Mr. Lester." He turned, looked up for a moment, but there was no smile on his face, not even a glance of recognition, as he bowed coldly, and walked on.

"Well, Laura, you've made a pretty fool of yourself with that John Bull; I'm really ashamed of you."

"Ashamed of me! I've done nothing you need be ashamed of, let me tell you. Indeed, Moll, you had better

look at home, and think of all your plans for winning the count."

"He was a prize worth planning for, but that surly Englishman—I've no patience with you."

"Yes, I grant you, if ugliness is worth planning for, if ignorance is worth planning for; didn't he try at first to pass himself off for an Italian? But he knew too little of the language for that, and then he turned Frenchman, as that was an easier part to play. I never look at that retreating forehead of his, and the lower part of his face, covered all over with horrid ugly hair, but I think of a baboon I saw once in a menagerie."

"Ma, listen to her," said Maria Teresa, who was crying with vexation, "can't you make her stop?"

"Hold your tongue, I beg, Laura," said the mother, "and do you, Maria, stop crying, for your looks will be none the better at the opera to-night, if you make your appearance with red eyes; you must bathe them with rose water; this will subdue the inflammation. Now, no more crying, I beg of you."

They had reached home, and were soon in the midst of cosmetics and perfumes, dresses and ornaments, folly and fashion.

"I told you how it would be, Laura," said Maria Archer to her sister, who stood, about a week after the carriage adventure, tearing a billet to pieces; "I told you John Bull would never stoop to play the part of Corydon to your Phyllis at the fancy ball."

"Edward Lester's a fool, but he's not the only man in the world, thank Heaven!"

"Better luck next time, Laura. Addio, Sorella; I drive with the count to-day."

CHAPTER IX.

HAPPINESS.

It was a pleasant day in summer, and, in the apartments of Mrs. Clayton, Amy was busily employed arranging everything in the most tasteful manner.

The snowy curtains were gracefully draped over the windows of the small front parlor, and from behind their folds came the scent of roses and geraniums, which had been carefully cultivated in pretty flower-pots, and bloomed as brightly as if they were the pride of some gay parterre. On the table were fresh flowers, simple flowers, for Amy could not purchase those that were rare; but who that saw her heart's ease, and double larkspur, and pinks, and mignonette, that "fragrant weed," grouped together with a few roses, and sprigs of lavender, and verbena, who that saw these could wish for anything rarer or prettier? Over one of the windows, in the back room, were trained morning glories, and scarlet runners, and the branches of a large mulberry, which grew beside the house, had been trained over the other, so that it formed a beautiful drapery, shutting out the heat and the too strong glare of light, while it admitted every breeze. In each window hung a cage with a canary, and the birds trilled forth their matin and even song in the shadow of the bright green leaves.

"O! I am sure Catharine will like these branches over the window; and how surprised she will be to see the

morning glories so high, and these flowers on the table—if I could only think of something else she would like—can you, mother? I love to do everything that will please her."

"She is always pleased with what you do for her, Amy."

"I know it, mother—but she is so good, and I love her so dearly, that I can't do half enough for her. O, if I were a fairy godmother! Catharine should have everything she wished, without asking for it."

Mrs. Clayton smiled at Amy's earnestness. Timid, truthful, and impulsive, warm-hearted and generous, Amy looked up to her sister as to a superior being, and loved her with the strong and disinterested love of a young and confiding heart.

In the evening, Catherine and William were both to be at home, and this was the secret of all Amy's preparations. Mrs. Clayton had that morning received a letter, the contents of which she wished to communicate to her children, and Amy had gone to them early in the day, with a request from their mother to meet at home in the afternoon.

"They are coming now, William and Catharine together. There they are, mother, just turning the corner —I'll run and have the door open for them!" and Amy ran and held it open until they reached the house.

"Dear mother! how charmingly it looks here!" exclaimed Catharine. "How beautiful these flowers are! And look, William, at these back windows, covered with vines and branches. This is some of your work, Amy."

"Yes, but don't you think it pretty, Catharine? O, when I'm rich, I'll have all sorts of rare and handsome

flowers, and birds, and pictures, and books; and mother shall have nothing to do but read all day long; and William shall have a study, where he may sit by himself and write his sermons; and you, Catharine, shall have the handsomest garden, and the choicest engravings and books; and I—I'll have a sweet little room, and a rose-wood writing-desk, and a gold pen, and I'll write poetry. O, how happy we shall all be!"

The little party laughed at Amy's ideas of happiness, and her mother "wondered whether a young poetess could arrange a tea-table?" Through Amy's mind had been flitting visions of splendid apartments, and many servants moving noiselessly at the nod of the mistress of the mansion, and she could not forbear smiling when, in a moment after, she found herself in the plain, neat basement of a small house, with the hands which, in imagination, had been guiding the golden pen, making the fire, hanging on the tea-kettle, and, while waiting for it to boil, cutting bread and butter, and arranging the table for tea. But love lightens all labor. Love throws a rose hue over the common things of common life. Love for wife and little one sweetens the toil of the poor laborer; love for the husband of her youth gives buoyancy to the step of the wife, as she treads the daily round of domestic duties; the thought that it is for *him*, that his care will be lessened, or his comfort and happiness increased by her exertions, will make burdens, otherwise too heavy to be borne, light as the idle gossamer that floats upon the summer breeze; and love for *them*, for mother, sister, brother, made Amy's basement brilliant as a banqueting room in a queen's palace!

Meantime, Catharine walked from room to room, pluck

ing leaves from the geraniums, and listening to the birds, while her heart swelled with gratitude.

"I am thinking, mother, what a pleasant contrast this house affords to the one we last occupied, and wonder it has never occurred to benevolent and wealthy individuals to build small and convenient houses, that might be rented to persons of moderate means. It is true, the money so invested would not bring to the capitalist such large returns as if it were expended in rearing dwellings for those more favored by fortune; but a far richer reward than a high per centage would be his—the sublime consciousness of doing good! The knowledge that he had been instrumental in giving fresh air, and green grass, and a few trees, to the sick and pining heart, which could neither afford to leave town in the pleasant summer months, nor pay the rent demanded for these things in the city! It must be that such a method of benefiting their fellows has never occurred to charitable people, who give large sums to societies, and therefore cannot be accused of wanting benevolence. It is a pity they do not go more abroad among the mass of the poorer and middling classes, and see how many, with pure tastes and refined feelings, are compelled to live in lanes and alleys, in basements and attics—how many such are compelled to come in contact with ruder natures, because they cannot pay a high rent. If houses were built with small, neat apartments, and, instead of lumbering up the lot with rear buildings, if it were left for a grass plat and a flower garden, what luxuries would these be to the lovers of cleanliness and quiet. But, alas! the rich do not think of thus benefiting their fellow-creatures."

"Perhaps it is only because this method of doing good

has not suggested itself to their minds, or been suggested to them by others," said Mrs. Clayton.

Here the conversation was interrupted by Amy's musical voice telling that tea was ready, and adding,

"Come with a good will,
Or come not at all."

"You don't mean to pass that off for original poetry, do you, Amy?" said William, who was always trying to teaze her. "If you do, all the critics, I mean all the boys and girls in the street, will convict you of plagiarism, for they have sung or said it from time immemorial."

The contents of the letter to which we have alluded, formed the subject of conversation during tea, and again and again each one tried to conjecture who could be the writer.

"I will read it once more, dear mother."

"Do, William; you cannot read too often what has given so much happiness."

"Dear Madam—Knowing that it was your own wish, and the desire of your late esteemed husband, that your son, after passing through college, should study for the ministry, I place at your disposal the funds requisite for carrying your plans into execution. Let the amount be invested in any manner you think safest and best; and I beg you will have no hesitation, my dear madam, in making free use of what comes to you thus anonymously. Believe me, with the truest regard, yours."

"O, who can it be?" said Catharine; "if we only knew, that we might thank him."

"I wish I could find out; when I am rich he shall have the handsomest room in my beautiful house, and—"

"What! castle building again, Amy? Well, I wish you *were* rich, and then I should not be under any obligation to a stranger," said William, who sat holding the letter in his hand, and looking thoughtfully upon it.

"William," said his mother, "you are now old enough to decide for yourself; have you any hesitation in accepting this generous offer? If you have, say it at once, and we will keep the money until we can restore it to the rightful owner."

"I hardly know what to do, mother, it seems so like charity. Although it is the dearest wish of my heart to go to college, and then study for the ministry, yet I would rather forego this wish, and work at the lowest employment, than be looked upon as a pensioner on any man's bounty. I have often thought, that if I had completed my college course, I might have entered the Theological Seminary as a beneficiary, and then, when I obtained a parish, I would repay all the cost of my education, and preach a quarterly sermon in aid of the funds of the institution."

"Who's castle building now, I wonder?" said Amy, looking with mock gravity into her brother's face.

"I am glad of one thing, however," William continued, "that the students are no longer called beneficiaries, but are entitled to a scholarship as a reward of merit. It is said, 'What's in a name?' but I think there's a great deal in it, and I never can forget the remark I heard made at the last commencement. There was a lady near me who was praising the abilities of a young man who had just received his testimonials, when another lady sneeringly remarked, 'O, he's nothing but a charity scholar!'"

"My dear William," said Mrs. Clayton, "I regret that

such a silly remark should have made so strong an impression. Many of the most pious, exemplary, and useful men in the ministry have received their education in this manner. It is no fault of theirs if the gift of wealth has been withheld from them; they have that which money cannot buy, talents, and godlike intellect, and it would be wrong if false pride, or dread of ill-natured remarks from the narrow-minded and cold-hearted, should make them bury the one, or neglect to cultivate the other."

"I try to think so too, mother, yet sometimes proud feelings will rise up in opposition to my better judgment; but in this matter, of so much interest to us all, I will be guided by you; now tell me exactly what you think about it?"

"I think, my dear, that you should accept the offer; nor will you compromise your self-respect by so doing. It has been made in all kindness, and doubtless a refusal would but pain the generous heart which has sought to befriend us with so much delicacy. If God spare your life, you may yet be enabled to refund the amount, and thus lighten the weight of obligation, while your heart remains grateful for the kindness. I hope you will never be of the number of those who are ashamed to acknowledge a favor, and who repay the disinterested goodness of a friend by neglect and ingratitude, or, what is worse, depreciate the motives of those who could have no possible interest to promote in serving them."

"Dear mother, let it be as you wish, and I promise you that I will endeavor to be the most diligent scholar within the walls of the college. What are you thinking about all this time, Catharine? you have not said one word since mother and I began to speak."

"I wished that mother might be heard without interruption, but now that your affairs are satisfactorily settled, I will communicate something nearly as strange as the contents of the letter."

"What is it, sister, what is it?" said Amy quickly. "I know it must be something good, you look so pleased about it."

"It relates to you Amy."

"To me! O, what is it?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Let me see—perhaps some one will send me a mocking-bird, you know I want one so badly—no?—well, maybe somebody will give me all Miss Edgeworth's, or Miss Sedgwick's works, and if they do—you know those old book-shelves of ours—well—I have some handsome green paper, and the other day I found some of the narrow gilt bordering we used to have, and I will paste them on the shelves, and put in a new green ribbon, and it will do to hang in that corner: I hope it may be the books!"

"Perhaps it's the gold pen to write poetry with," suggested William.

"No, it is none of these, and as you cannot guess I must tell you. Mrs Clinton desired me to ask mother, if she would allow Amy to come every day to her house, and receive instructions with Ida and Emily. Emily is about your own age, Amy, and is a very lovely, amiable little girl. What do you say, mother? Will you trust Amy to me? Do you think I can be the 'good governess?'"

For a moment Mrs. Clayton was silent. Amy, mistaking the cause of her mother's emotion, threw her arms about her neck, and whispered, "Don't you wish me to leave you, mother? You will be alone nearly all day if I go."

"Would you like it, Amy?"

"O, of all things," said the child, clapping her hands, "but will you not be lonesome? I can't go if you are, mother."

"No, my love, I will not be lonesome, my heart has too many pleasant thoughts to dwell upon. God has been very good to us, my children. In our greatest poverty and destitution, the hand of His protecting providence was ever upholding us. In the darkest hours of trial, the light of his love sent a ray of hope to cheer our almost desponding hearts. God has been very good to us, and may our future lives be devoted to his service."

Twilight deepened into night, and the moonbeams stole in through the vine leaves, and rested on Amy's beautiful face as she sat with her head reclining on her mother's lap. The soul of the young girl was in dreamland. That was a happy night in the widow's dwelling.

CHAPTER X.

THE FANCY BALL.

Crowds of fashionables were thronging to the illuminated mansion of the Archers. It was the night of the fancy ball, and all the world was expected to be present.

There were kings and peasants, monks and soldiers, princesses and flower-girls, ballad-singers and sisters of charity, noble lords and stately dames of the olden time, and simple shepherd lads and lasses. Among these latter was Laura Archer, leading about a pet lamb tied with a

blue ribbon, in the manner in which ladies lead their lap dogs. She had hesitated for some time between a lamb and a goat and pipe, a la Sterne's Maria. But the lamb at length prevailed, as she wanted a shepherd to attend her with his crook. It was for this she had written, requesting the presence of Edward Lester. In place of him might be seen an ungainly man, with dyed whiskers, and a jaunty wig, using his crook as a walking-stick to help him follow the—

"Snow-white mountain lamb, and a maiden at its side."

Maria Teresa, in her robe of ermine and velvet, with the diadem on her brow, looked, her mother thought, exactly like the picture of Queen Victoria she had seen in a window down Broadway; and the count, the divine count, was certainly handsomer and more like a prince than Prince Albert himself (whom he personated) could be, as the latter was nothing but a German, with red hair and sandy whiskers.

We will not stop to detail the ridiculous things that were said and done, by many who had no conception whatever of the characters they represented. However, bating some little jealousies and heart-burnings, the evening passed off gaily enough, and after her guests had taken their departure, Mrs. Archer sought her husband to detail her triumph.

"But where are the girls? I must see Maria, to tell her how well she looked. Depend upon it, Mr. Archer, that girl will be a princess yet. I begin to think the count is not quite the thing for her, and as he professed his willingness to marry either of the girls when he first came here, I will try and play my cards so that he will yet take

Laura. When we go abroad next year, I have no doubt but some rich Italian prince will fall in love with Maria, and then, only think of it, Mr. Archer! one daughter a princess, and the other a countess! Bless my stars! What will Susan Jones say then?"

Mr. Archer had long ceased to expostulate; uttering a half groan, he turned away from his wife, and, sick and dispirited, threw himself on the bed in his own room, and was soon buried in a dull, heavy, unrefreshing sleep.

Laura was with her mother, but Maria could nowhere be found. On examining her room, they found the drawers in disorder. From them, and from her wardrobe, most of her valuable clothing had been taken, and all her jewelry was gone. On a table lay two or three lines, hurriedly written with a pencil, which informed them that she had eloped with her beloved count. Mrs. Archer did not wake her husband, indeed she did not think it worth while to do so, and it was not until the next morning at breakfast that he heard his daughter was missing. What could have been the girl's motive? Her mother had all along forwarded her wishes, and her father was not allowed to interfere in the matter. True, whenever he had been appealed to, he gave a flat denial. But what of that? Both mother and daughters were too well accustomed to have their own way to be in the least daunted. Mrs. Archer could not forgive Maria for putting it out of her power to have a splendid wedding, and the only thing that soothed her wounded pride was, that her daughter had ran away with a count!

In about a week a letter was received from the missing damsel, which ran as follows:

"Dear Mamma—You know I never could bear the dull, old-fashioned way of getting married, without any trouble

at all, everybody consenting but papa, (who, as you say, 'is as good as nobody.') No, no, I am fond of romance—and so is my divine Antonio—and we arranged a pretty little plan between us. On the night of the ball, the count's carriage drove to the opposite side of the street, at a short distance from our house, and I repeatedly stole away from the company, and threw out several parcels, which were caught by the count's servant, who was standing on the side-walk ready to receive them. Just before the ball broke up, I contrived to muffle myself and steal out unperceived. I was soon joined by my Antonio. We drove to the house of a clergyman, roused him from his slumbers, had the ceremony performed, and left New York in the morning.

"Wasn't that a dear, delightful, romantic way of getting married? You know it is three months since the count first visited our house, and I thought I knew him perfectly; but, like Lucy Clark, who married her husband after a week's courtship, I can say, 'Antonio improves on acquaintance.' Her husband's name wasn't Antonio, though—it was Jeremiah! Horrid! Jeremiah Jarnigan! Tell Lolly she may lay as many traps as she pleases, now the count is safe. I hope she'll be more fortunate the next time she puts her head out of the carriage window.

"Your loving and dutiful,

"MARIA TERESA BANDINI."

"I hope to heaven she'll get enough of him yet!" was the kind response of Laura to her sister's letter.

Mr. Archer was the only one who seemed to feel the loss of his daughter. His heart, unlike his wife's, was devoid of vanity and ambition; and had his children sought his kindness, or even repaid what he bestowed without their

seeking, they would have found him a fond and indulgent parent. But during their tender years his heart had been engrossed by the accumulation of wealth, and his daughters were entirely under the control of their mother. He often comforted himself with the thought that they were too young to receive any impressions, and that when they grew older he would take more charge of their education, and make them what he wished. But when they had grown older, and he attempted to use the least parental authority, the young ladies rebelled and ran to mamma, who always took the part of her darlings, and in their hearing reproached Mr. Archer for his undue severity. By degrees, he became weary of these repeated conflicts, and left both mother and daughters to themselves, while they regarded him as a mere money-making machine, of no use in the world but to coin gold for their extravagance. As for Mrs. Archer, she had the consolation of telling the friends who came to condole with her, "that if the dear child had eloped, it was with no vulgar person, but a real count"—and Laura rejoiced in her heart to be rid of her sister.

It was the gay season at Saratoga, and Maria and her dear Antonio were there, figuring among the fashionables, gay with the gayest, and dashing with the dashiest.

But already had there been some matrimonial tête-à-têtes, in which the lady pouted and wept, and the gentleman forgot his soft tone and broken English. Many changes were rung on the word money during these discussions, the count swearing that his funds were getting low, and that his wife must write to her father. Maria, although spoiled and self-willed, had not the cool assurance of her sister, and forbore complying with her husband's

request. At length they returned to New York, and took lodgings in a fashionable hotel. Here the count compelled his wife to write a note addressed to her mother, but which he hoped might fall into the hands of Mr. Archer himself. Unfortunately, it was not received by either, but by Laura, who, to her other accomplishments, added those of breaking seals, and imitating various handwritings. She answered it in the name of her father, pouring a torrent of wrath on the unhappy Maria, commanding her never to dare write, or trouble him in any way again, adding that he had disinherited and cast her off forever!

The rage of the count on receiving this answer knew no bounds, and after venting his passion on his poor wife in a harsher manner than he had ever done before, he deliberately went to the bureau, took out a valuable gold watch and chain, a number of rings, and other costly trinkets, and began arranging them in separate boxes. Maria sat trembling, silent and tearful, not daring to speak lest he should again become enraged; but when she saw him put them in his pocket, fasten his coat, and walk toward the door, she could contain herself no longer.

"Where are you going, Antonio? Pray, do not take those things from me—pray, do not—leave me at least that diamond ring—oh, leave me that!—it was papa's present on my last birth-day."

The weeping girl clung to his arm, but he rudely shook her off, and in a harsh tone, and with a vile oath, cursed both her and her papa, and flung himself violently out of the room.

Maria was alone—alone in her destitution—alone in her despair! She was reaping the bitter fruits of her ingrati-

tude and folly, and the tempter was whispering dark and sinful thoughts to her unhappy heart.

"I cannot live! I will not live!" she exclaimed, starting to her feet. "No one cares for me—I will die, and end this misery at once!"

Again she seated herself and again rose. This time she opened the window and looked out. There was total darkness, for the moon was eclipsed, and she shuddered with fear as she closed the window, and stood with her hands clasped to her burning forehead. There was a knocking at the door—she started, and, in a hollow voice, asked the person to come in. It was only her maid, who came to ask if she had rung the bell. On being answered in the negative, the woman still remained, and Maria trembled and turned away her face, thinking her purpose could be detected there; so true it is that "*guilt* makes cowards of us all." The servant, a kind-hearted Scotch lassie, after looking earnestly at her for a moment said—

"Ye dinna leuk ow're weel, me leddy; wull ye tell me gif there's onything I can do for ye?"

"Nothing, Maggie. I've a headache, and feel a little nervous, that is all."

With a respectful and well-meant familiarity, Maggie put her hand on that of her mistress.

"Gude sake! but ye'r awfu' cauld. I'll rin doon an' ask a wee hanfu' o' meal frae th' cook, an' mak ye a wee sup o' warm porridge."

"Never mind, Maggie. I thank you—but I could not take it now."

Maggie was a shrewd observer, and had noticed that her "puir leddy," as she called her, was unhappy; and more than once she had seen traces of tears on her mis-

tress's cheek. She saw, too, that the "puir leddy" was left nearly all day and all night to the solitude of her own room, for her husband not only neglected her himself, but kept up a perfect system of espionage, lest she should communicate with the boarders, and perhaps disclose his infamous conduct. In consequence of this treatment of his wife, by her master, Maggie showed toward Maria a tenderness of manner which was often soothing to the irritated feelings of the friendless sufferer, and which made Maria permit the seeming freedom of the honest, warm-hearted girl.

"It's awfu' mirk the night, an' ye bein' alane might hae been frighted like—an' nae wonder gif ye war', for I hae thought o' naething but the day o' judgment since I leukit on the moon, an' saw it turn sae black an' awfu' like."

The day of judgment! These words arrested Maria's attention, and gently dismissing Maggie, with an assurance that she was better, and would ring if she required her services, she was once more alone.

The day of judgment! Was there such a day? She had heard of it occasionally when lounging in church, admiring her own dress, or criticising her neighbors; but it had long been a forgotten sound, until Scotch Maggie spoke it in a tone of solemn earnestness. Was there, or rather would there be, such a day? And would she be there? Her every deed and thought arrayed before the Judge? On *what* had she but now been thinking? Self-destruction! Horrible! Horrible!

Because her own rebellious and unsubdued will had brought woe upon herself—because her own crime had brought its own punishment—she would rashly fling away

the precious gift of life with which her Creator had endowed her—would peril her immortal soul, and stand with all this load of guilt upon her head at the dread day of judgment! These were the first serious thoughts that had ever passed through the poor girl's mind, and humbled and repentant, she involuntarily fell on her knees, and asked God for pity and pardon. When her husband returned, she bore his taunts and unkindness with patience and meekness. The good seed had already been sown which might yet bring forth a plentiful harvest.

A week or two passed away, during which Maria endeavored to calm and soothe her husband's irritable temper, but without effect, when, at an early hour one morning, a loud knocking was heard at the door, and it was told the count some gentlemen wished to see him. Hurridly dressing himself he left the room. His wife heard a noise, and angry voices in the hall, and with some trepidation awaited her husband's return; but, instead of him, Maggie entered and spoke to her mistress.

"Dinna be frighted, yer leddyship; it's unco odd, but nae doot me maister wull explain a' to yer sateesfaction."

"What is odd, Maggie? What was the cause of the noise I heard just now?"

"I canna weel tell, yer leddyship; but my maister has gane oot verra airly th' morn."

"Gone out! Where to? Who was with him?"

"I dinna ken wha was wi' him—but they war nae gentlefolk, I'm thinking, frae their leuks."

"May I speak with you a moment, madam?" asked the proprietor of the hotel, looking in at the half-open door.

"Certainly, sir," Maggie withdrew, and, for a few moments, there was an embarassing silence.

"I do not know that you are fully aware, my dear madam, of what occurred this morning," said Mr. Masters, hesitatingly.

"What has occurred? My maid informed me that my husband—"

Maria paused—she felt that whatever had taken place must relate to him.

"I am sorry to say he has been placed under arrest."

"Arrest! For what? In the name of pity tell me all at once!"

Mr. Masters again hesitated.

"Tell me, sir, I beg of you!" said Maria, in agony. "The reality cannot be more dreadful than this suspense."

"Various things have been charged against him, among the rest swindling and forgery!"

Maria fell as if struck down by a blow, and, for awhile, was unconscious of her wretchedness. Mr. Masters and his excellent wife paid every attention to the poor sufferer, who, for a few days, was unable to leave her room. The moment her strength permitted, she obtained permission to visit the cell of her husband. Every day she went to him, soothing and endeavoring to comfort him, forgetting his past unkindness, and weeping over his present misfortunes. Meantime, the newspapers were filled with contradictory reports, all, however, agreeing in denouncing the soi-disant count as a villain and an imposter. Some, not content with exposing the crimes of the husband, indulged in a strain of ribald mirth at the expense of the wife, displaying their vulgar witticism in contrasting the cells in

the Hall of Detention, with the superb magnificence of a nobleman's palace, and wondering whether her ladyship admired the new residence of her lord?

Have the conductors of such journals no human sympathies? Have they no mothers, no sisters, no wives, that they can thus sport with the wretchedness of a woman? Why will they court the laugh of the malevolent (for none other will laugh) by shooting poisoned weapons, every one of which rankles in the heart of some innocent victim connected by the closest ties with the real or supposed criminal? Have they no fear of God, no love for man, in their hearts, that they thus scatter fire-brands, arrows, and death, and say—"they are in sport"?

At length the time appointed for the trial arrived.

The count was proved to be an imposter, convicted of the crimes which had been alleged against him, and sentenced to twenty years' confinement in the State Prison.

Maria exerted herself to the utmost—she wrote, petitioned, did everything in her power to obtain a pardon—but it could not be granted, for it was proved on the trial that the convict had been pardoned not more than two years before.

The once gay girl, the sometime wretched wife, was now utterly alone, and but for some objects of value, which had not been observed by her husband on the night he plundered her drawer, she would have been destitute. But she no longer rebelled—she felt that chastisement had been good for her—her health, too, was failing—and humbled and subdued she resolved on making one more appeal to her family. In terms of repentance and sorrow she wrote to her father, and dreading her sister's influence, she addressed the letter to his place of business. Mr

Archer, who had been out of the city, went to her immediately, and the first fond intercourse of their lives then took place between the sorrowing father and repentant child.

"You must go home with me, my dear—you must no longer remain among strangers."

"Dear father, although you are so kind to me, I am yet afraid to meet my mother and sister; from your last letter I was led to believe that none of you would ever forgive me."

"What letter are you talking about, child?'

"One I received in answer to a note I sent you some time ago."

"I never received any communication from you; but I see—I see—" Mr. Archer paused, and both were silent. A conviction of the truth flashed upon them—the letter had been forged by Laura!

At first, Mrs. Archer and Laura positively refused admitting Maria into the house. She had disgraced the family by running away with a fellow who was no count after all, but a vile convict from the State Prison! What *would* Susan Jones say? But in this point Mr. Archer was firm, and her own room was prepared for her under the superintendence of her father.

For a week after her return home Maria did not see her sister; and when they met Laura taunted her most bitterly. As for Mrs. Archer, all her trouble was to learn "what her friends would say of the affair?—and to wonder if they would visit her, after such a disgrace befalling her daughter?" But they did visit her, for while Maria was confined to her chamber, a confirmed invalid, her mother and sister received and entertained their guests in a greater style of magnificence than ever.

Many an hour of sweet communion had Mr. Archer with his suffering child. He left the counting-room early every afternoon, and passed the time in her sick chamber. With his own hands he ministered to her wants, and she watched for his step at the appointed time, and her eye lighted up at his approach, and she loved him with the deep love of an affectionate child for a fond and revered parent.

Thus were these two drawn together by sorrow. Thus was she taught the folly of her former frivolous pursuits, and thus did he find one frail flower to love and cherish in the barren wilderness by which he was surrounded.

CHAPTER XI.

DISCLOSURES.

The scorching sun of midsummer had driven many of the citizens from their heated pavements and uncleanly streets, to cool grassy fields and sweet-scented meadows; from the din of traffic, and the whirl of wheels, to the song of birds, and the music of waters. Among the travellers were Mrs. Clinton and her daughters on their way to Niagara.

Catharine had requested so earnestly to be allowed to remain with her mother that Mrs. Clinton consented, though with some reluctance, as she knew it to be one of Catharine's earnest desires to visit the Falls; but Mrs. Clayton had been complaining for a week or two, and her daughter could not be induced to leave her. It was the

latter part of August; Mrs. Clayton and Amy were from home, and Catharine, who had been busily employed all the morning, had seated herself near one of the windows. She was engaged reading, and so wholly absorbed by her book that she was not aware any one had entered the room until she heard her name spoken. With a bright blush on her cheek, she rose and extended her hand. "Mr. Lester! this is an unexpected visit; I thought you would not return until Mrs. Clinton came back."

"That was my intention before I left here; but letters were forwarded to me, which I received while at Lake George. They were from England, and contained a request that I would return immediately, as my grandfather had been suffering from an attack of paralysis, and his recovery was doubtful."

"And you are soon going to England?"

"Yes, I shall leave in the packet of September 1st."

Catharine's head grew dizzy, and the color left her cheek. What was it to her that Mr. Lester was going to England? What was it to her if he were no more to be an ever-welcome guest at Mrs. Clinton's? What to her, if instead of the teacher, earning for himself an honorable maintenance, he was hereafter to be the man of leisure, the gentleman of fortune? These thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, and sent a shiver through her frame, but she rallied herself in an instant.

"I regret that I am obliged to leave so soon," resumed Lester, as he drew his chair nearer to Catharine, "and I regret it the more, because my return here will be indefinitely postponed."

"You will return, then?"

"Yes, if my life is spared, I shall; but not while my

grandfather is living. It was against his wish that I first left him, and if I find him alive on my return, I will stay with him during the remainder of his days, be they few or many."

"Mrs. Clinton will regret your departure."

"Not more than I shall regret parting from such a noble woman."

"Julia, and the girls, will miss you sadly."

"And will no one else miss me, Catharine?" and Lester took her hand in his. "Will none beside Mrs. Clinton regret my departure? Will not you sometimes think of the many happy evenings we have passed together?"

"Mr. Lester!"

"Catharine, I know you to be a woman above the shallow artifices of your sex; answer me with your own truthfulness, will you miss me?"

"Mr. Lester!" this time Catharine's voice was scarcely audible, and the hand that lay in Edward Lester's was cold and trembling.

"You are silent, Catharine; may I, dare I hope you will regret our parting?"

"I will."

"Heaven bless you for these words. I have loved you long, Catharine, but would not have told my love thus abruptly, had I not been summoned hastily away. I have more to ask—will you let me call your mother mine? Will you leave her, and go with me to my English home? Will you be my wife, dearest, my true, loving wife? We will come back again—we will settle in this country, never to leave it more—will you go with me, Catharine?"

"I cannot, Edward; ask anything but that?"

"Catharine," said Lester reproachfully, "I thought

but now that you loved me, and I thought, too, that the woman who truly loves would leave all, sacrifice all, for the man to whom she has given her heart."

"I will wait years for your return, but I cannot go with you and leave my mother alone."

"Your mother will not be alone, William and Amy remain with her."

"Amy is but a child, and William, though good and kind, could never supply the place of a daughter. Do not ask it, Lester; my mother has passed through many sorrows, and I have always been with her—and—I will be candid with you—I will never be separated from her while she is living."

"Catharine, Catharine, this is mere child's play! Why did you not tell me at once that you did not love me—that you were merely trifling away an idle hour?"

Grieved and astonished to see such impetuosity in one of Lester's usually calm demeanor, she replied,

"You wrong me, Edward, I have not been trifling with you. Were I alone in the world, I would go with you wherever you wished—any spot on the habitable globe would be to me a paradise if you were there—I would live for you—toil for you—die for you! No, Edward, I have not trifled with you." Ashamed of her earnestness, Catharine buried her face in her hands. It was Lester's turn to be astonished, gratified, delighted. It was thus he wished to be loved, with a woman's whole soul.

"I see you are not to be moved from your resolution, nor will I ask it. I own, too, that I honor your motives, that I appreciate your filial love, and that if I had been less selfish in my passion, I would not have made the request. But the thought of leaving you for an indefinite

period, the thought that perhaps another might woo and win you, totally unmanned me. Forgive me, dearest, you said you would wait; bless you for this! You do not doubt me? you do not think I will ever forget you?"

"Doubt you, Edward! I would as soon doubt that the stars I look on nightly are shining in the heavens, as doubt your truth. But let us talk calmly, Lester. You are going from here, you know not when to return. Time works strange changes—not that I think you would be influenced by merely external circumstances — but your friends may wish you to do what will be more for your interest than returning to this country might be; if so, do not hesitate, do what will be best for you, most pleasing to them. But, Lester, write to me—let me know all—keep me not in the tortures of suspense—let me know all—and if change should come, I will still bless you, and pray for your happiness."

"I will write to you, and you will answer me?"

"With my mother's approval I will."

"And then, when I return, and you are mine, your mother will live with us, and Amy, and William; what a happy family we shall be, dearest!"

Catharine's blushing cheek and tearful eye were more eloquent than words. Here was happiness such as she had never dared to contemplate. To be loved by Lester—to remain with her mother—to continue her guardianship over Amy—to see her beloved brother a minister of Christ's gospel. The past, the dark past was annihilated! The rainbow of promise rested on the future! No wonder Catharine was silent—no wonder the tide of happiness rushing full upon her heart filled it to overflowing—no wonder that she wept! At length Lester took leave, hav-

ing promised to call in the morning for Catharine, to visit an exhibition of pictures which he wished to see before he sailed.

On Mrs. Clayton's return Catharine told her all that had passed. Long and earnest was the conversation of mother and daughter, and with her mother's blessing resting on her head, Catharine laid her on her pillow—but not to sleep. Blissful visions, holy confiding thoughts, day dreams, and air castles occupied her mind, and the clock in a neighboring steeple tolled the hour of two before her senses were steeped in the forgetfulness of slumber. Oh, warm love of the young heart, how beautiful art thou in thy truth, thy earnestness, thy self-abandonment. Oh, warm love of the young heart, how dost thou revel in the ideal, and clothe the world with sunshine, and drink deep of the poetry of life!

Almost the first person they met at the exhibition rooms was Laura Archer. She reddened with shame and vexation when she saw Catharine accompanied by Lester, and, like one of old,

> "With jealous leer malign
> Eyed them askance."

To think he had refused an invitation from her, and was now walking arm and arm with the governess! With her heart bursting with rage and mortification, she watched Lester's elegant figure, and kindling eye, as he moved from one picture to another, and pointed out their beauties to his companion. There was no mistaking his look, he was in love—in love with Catharine Clayton! And she, too, listened to his words, and raised her eyes to his so modestly, yet confidingly—that she—yes—she must be aware of his passion.

Laura turned her gaze from Lester and looked upon the boy who was trying to play the man by her side, and answered him almost contemptuously as he uttered some silly remarks about tone and color. The boy-man twirled his hat, looked confused, and vowed "Miss Archer was so odd that he couldn't understand her."

Laura made no reply, for her thoughts were not with the speaker. She had moved close behind the objects of her scrutiny, as they stood before a picture of Ver Bryck's. The artist had selected a grand and awful subject, and his genius had depicted it with startling vividness and solemn beauty. Amid the terrors of the final day, up through the lurid light of the burning heavens, rose a redeemed spirit. With a calm and holy faith beaming from the angelic brow, upward and onward went the saint, unharmed amid surrounding ruin, for her stay was on the Rock of Ages!

Down thro gh the appalling horrors of thick darkness, and utter wo, lower, and lower, sunk the lost! A look of agony was raised upward. Had that fair spirit been linked with him through time? Were they to be parted now? parted forever, and forever! through the ceaseless roll of ages? on—on through a never-ending eternity?

"'The one shall be taken and the other left.' Pray God for us, dear Catharine, that such a fate may not be ours at the last day," said Lester, in a tone meant for Catharine's ear alone. But another had drunk in every word he uttered.

"Dear Catharine! because he was in love with *her*, he would not come! Despised for *her!*" and the listener turned away with deep hate for the innocent girl rankling in her heart.

Laura Archer was called a belle. Hers was a showy figure, set off by fashionable dress, and fashionable ornaments. Her face was not very pretty, but she had large black eyes, over which she let fall her long eyelashes with an air of the most captivating modesty. Her mouth was rather large, but it was filled with fine teeth, which she took care to display on every occasion. Her tone of voice, her mode of speech, her whole manner, was a mixture of affectation and coquetry, and yet she had troops of admirers. Who were they? In general, men past the prime of life, and boys in the first importance of dawning manhood. The antique beau, and the middle-aged widower, whose vanity had outlived their discretion, were proud of being smiled on by the gay Miss Archer. And the half-grown coxcomb, the being of all others most unbearable as a lover, was petted, and caressed, until his allowance of pocket money vanished, purchasing presents for the sordid and avaricious girl, who professed to be the most unselfish of human beings. But antique beau, and spruce widower, and coxcomb boy, served to swell the train of her conquests, and were each in turn smiled upon, until some new caprice took possession of the lady's fancy, when they were dismissed and forgotten, as easily, and carelessly, as Mrs. Archer had cast off her old friends when stemming the current of fashion. Laura's temper we have seen displayed in her altercations with her sister; her heart we have looked into as she turned away from Lester and Catharine.

And such are the women men call unique, piquant, and admire for their spirit and frankness of manner; even their over desire to please is thought to evince an amiable disposition; while the woman who is unassuming, and re-

tiring, whose heart is like a folded rose-bud, ready to expand and shed its sweetness under the genial influence of a loved and loving home, is looked upon as tame and spiritless; well enough, mayhap, for a patient, quiet, domestic drudge, but totally unfit to be the wife of any one save some dull, plodding simpleton. What strange mistakes men often make in their estimate of female character!

In a few days after they had visited the exhibition, Lester sailed for England, and Catharine sat alone, with tears falling on the small gold ring of her betrothal. She raised it once more to her lips, placed it on her fingers, restrained her tears, and with a calm thoughtfulness upon her brow, and a woman's love within her heart, she turned to her daily duties at home, from which she hourly expected to be called by the arrival of Mrs. Clinton.

CHAPTER XII.

PRIDE AND RUIN.

"WHAT do you think I saw this morning?" said a lady visitor, who dropped in at Mrs. Clinton's. "What do you think I saw this morning? Why, a red flag hung out at the Archers'. Everything is going off at sheriff's sale. My husband heard Mr. Archer was about to fail, but really I did not think it would be quite so bad. A sheriff's sale!"

"I am sorry for them," said Mrs. Clinton, "it will be a great shock to the family, and more particularly to the poor girl who is so ill."

"O, I forgot to tell you, she was buried the day before yesterday."

"Buried! Why I did not know she was dead," said Mrs. Clinton with emotion.

"O, yes, she went off quite easy after all. They had no thought she was dying, for I was there at a little supper in the evening, and Mrs. Archer and Laura, who had retired quite fatigued, were not in the room when she died. Well, she is better off, poor thing, out of the sorrows of this troublesome world."

"I trust that she is; the latter part of her life was spent in preparing for the solemn realities of eternity."

"Yes, I believe she grew very Methodistical, and had a clergyman there to pray with her. But isn't it strange about Mr. Archer failing? though I often told my husband such extravagance could not last. Such balls, and such parties, as the Archers gave! Such dresses! Why, I have known Laura Archer to pay seven hundred dollars for a camel's hair shawl, and she thought nothing of giving twenty-five and thirty for a bonnet and feathers. As for silks, laces, and embroideries, there was no end to them; no wonder her father was ruined!"

Again Mrs. Clinton repeated that she was sorry for them.

"Why, my dear Mrs. Clinton, how can you be sorry for such people? You know Mrs. Archer was a vulgar woman, who should have had no pretension to anything of the kind, and so I always said when I came away from her parties."

"But why did you go to her parties if you thought so? it was surely unfriendly to partake of her hospitality and then turn her into ridicule." The lady colored slightly.

"I never looked upon it in that light; she would insist upon our coming, and we could not shut our eyes to the extravagance that was displayed around us." As Mrs. Clin-

ton made no further remark, the lady soon took her leave, to detail her malicious stories to more willing ears.

Mrs. Hardy was a censorious woman, and as her own income was rather limited, she always looked with envious eyes on the rich dresses and splendid entertainments of her wealthier friends, and more particularly the Archers. Being somewhat of a toady, she generally contrived to be invited by either Laura or her mother, so that no one ever passed an evening with Mrs. Archer without meeting her penumbra, Mrs. Hardy.

Mrs. Hardy was but one of a large class, who court and flatter their acquaintances (we cannot say friends) in the time of their prosperity, but when adversity comes they flee away, and like birds of ill-omen go croaking over their former companions' downfall. You may know them by the burden of their strain. "I said so—I knew it would come to this—I told you such extravagance could not last, and now my words have come true; I wonder people can make such fools of themselves!" In this instance, Mrs. Hardy's words had indeed been true. The Archers were completely ruined! So suddenly had it come even upon Mr. Archer himself, who had latterly devoted most of his time to his dying daughter, that he found no time for making arrangements of any kind, and before he had recovered from the stupefaction of grief caused by the loss of his child, everything was in the power of his creditors. His wife and daughter were loud in their reproaches. "It was all owing," they said, "to his inattention to business. They thought it would end so when he was spending half his time in Moll's room, with her and the Methodistical parson. What in the world were they to do now? Work? no, that they would not, they would starve first! A pretty

thing it would be to see ladies who had moved in the so ciety in which they had, obliged to earn their living like common vulgar people. What would their friends say? No, indeed, they had still some pride left"

And so they had, a contemptible pride! ashamed to use their energies for obtaining their own support—ashamed to act independently, and avow honestly that they were poor. Where was their self-respect? Lost in conjecturing "what the world would say?" in wondering "what Susan Jones would say?" Where was their self-reliance? gone with their wealth, the only thing on which they had ever relied for obtaining the friendship of the world of fashion. And thus were these woman, who had been so proud and arrogant in prosperity, who were so incapable of using the bounteous gifts of a good Providence aright, thus were they, mean and spiritless, filled with false pride and false shame in adversity.

After many delays, Mr. Archer succeeded in obtaining a situation as clerk in a counting-room. His wife and daughter were violently opposed to his accepting it.

"A clerk!" said Laura—"only think of papa being a clerk! I shall die with mortification! Indeed, papa, you were very stupid, that you did not sooner look into your affairs, and make an assignment of your property, to secure it from your creditors."

"Would that have been honest, Laura?" asked her father, mildly.

"Honest—fiddlesticks!" said Mrs. Archer sharply—"who cares for honesty now-a-days? What would have become of the Goldmans, if their father had not played his cards better than you have done? You know he took the benefit of the act, and when Thompson, at whose store

the girls had purchased all their dry goods, asked him to pay part of the large bill that was due, Mr. Goldman vowed to heaven he could hardly support his family! While, at the same time, they had never left their beautiful house, and were every day driving through Broadway in their own carriage. Now, if you had been as sharp as Mr. Goldman, Laura and me might have had our house and carriage still, in spite of the creditors."

"Once I might have been tempted to do so, but not now," replied Mr. Archer. "I wish, my dear, instead of looking to such men as Mr. Goldman for example, that you would rather endeavor to emulate the conduct of our old friend, Mrs. Remsen, who, when her husband failed, not only insisted on giving her own personal property toward the liquidation of his debts, but, with her daughter, immediately sought employment, and thought none degrading that would insure their independence. I have always regretted that just at *that* time you blotted their names from your visiting list."

"Lord, papa, how strangely you talk! Who was going over to an obscure street, on the east side of the town, to visit them, I wonder? I would not put my foot in such a plebeian place."

"Laura, you forget yourself. Mrs. Clinton, whom you were so proud of receiving as a guest, always visited, and still continues to visit the Remsens. I fear your pride must receive a still greater humbling. You know that through the kindness of a friend, we obtained this furnished house, until we could make some permanent arrangement. Here we cannot stay, for we cannot afford it. To-day I hired apartments suited to our limited means, and to-morrow we must remove to them."

"Apartments! Where are they, Mr. Archer?" exclaimed his wife, drawing her little fat figure to its full height—"where are they? I repeat. It is necessary that my daughter and myself should know where we are going to. It must be no mean place, let me tell you. What street are they in?"

"Division street—there is a shop underneath, but the rooms are pleasant; and, as we will not be able to keep a servant, I hired them mostly for their convenience."

"Good heavens! Mr. Archer, are you mad? Do you think Laura and me will go and live in Division street—up stairs, too—and over a shop?"

"I declare, papa, this is insufferable—I shall not stir a step from where I am!" said Laura, crying with vexation.

"I am afraid you must, Laura, as this house is already rented to other tenants, who take possession the day after to-morrow. If we remain here longer than to-morrow night, we must either go to our new lodging, or walk into the street."

The mother and daughter cried, complained and stormed by turns, but, finding there was no alternative, they consented to Mr. Archer buying some furniture, and having it placed by day in the rooms, to which they would remove at night, for they were determined that none of their old acquaintances should ever find out where they had gone to. But they did not succeed in keeping themselves hidden, for Mrs. Hardy, who had envied their prosperity, and gloated over their ruin, was determined on finding them—and having done so, she one day walked into the front door without knocking, ascended the stairs, and, with the coolest effrontery imaginable, passed into a room where she found Mrs. Archer engaged in some very homely do

mestic avocations, and Laura seated, *en déshabillé*, reading a new French novel, from a circulating library.

"My dear Mrs. Archer—my dear Laura!" began Mrs. Hardy, before they had time to recover from the surprise and mortification caused by her unexpected entrance—"how delighted I am to see you, and how sorry to find that you, dear Laura, with your refined and elegant habits, are obliged to live in this place." Here she glanced at the scanty furniture, and showed a very perceptible curl of the lip. "And you, Mrs. Archer, how very domestic you've grown!"

Mrs. Archer, instead of repelling Mrs. Hardy's familiar intrusiveness, and by her own dignity putting to silence the insolence of her visitor, began to apologize for having been found busy at all, and talked something of the servant being out of the way.

"O, pray don't apologize to me—you know we were so intimate—and you can't think how shocked I was to see a red flag hung out at your house; dear me, people should be economical in this world—but we must all live and learn, I suppose. Laura, dear, I wonder if you will be invited to many parties this winter? For my part, I don't pretend to give very expensive ones—nothing at all like yours—if I did, Mr. Hardy would soon be ruined."

There was little attempt on the part of the Archers to prolong conversation, and when Mrs. Hardy had fully gratified her curiosity as to the number of apartments they occupied, and had ascertained beyond a doubt that they kept no servant, she took her leave, to spread the news from house to house, among the former acquaintances of the Archers. Among the rest she did not forget

Mrs. Clinton, and this lady, from a purely kind feeling, sought out their abode, but found no admission.

Mrs. Clayton, too, and Catharine, forgetting the past arrogance of Laura Archer, went to see them—but, after knocking until they were tired, were obliged to turn away from the house. The Archers could see from the window above who was below on the street, and they had let these, their only true friends, go away without the least mark of courtesy, or even recognition. Ever since the untimely visit of Mrs. Hardy, the front door had been kept locked, and was only opened on the return of Mr. Archer in the evening.

A miserable home was his to return to after a day of toil! Reproaches and recriminations between mother and daughter, an untidy room, and a slovenly-prepared supper! How often did he recur to the days when he thought of training his wife! How often did he wish to be at rest in the church-yard, sleeping quietly beside his daughter! Poor Mr. Archer!

After struggling on for two years longer, his wish was at length granted, and he was laid in his grave a weary and heart-broken man.

Laura and her mother now found it absolutely necessary to do something for their support, and after the usual "what will people say?" they decided on hiring a furnished house, which had been offered them by a friend of Mr. Archer's, and taking boarders, alleging as an apology for so doing, "that they would be very lonesome if there were no one in the house but themselves."

No sooner was Laura in her new abode than she began coquetting as of old, but without her former success.

Then she had the reputation of being rich, *now* she was known to be poor.

There was a young countryman, whose father had sent him to the city to remain during the winter, that he might qualify himself for opening a store in his native village in the spring, and he boarded with the Archers.

Laura, having failed in all her other matrimonial speculations, laid siege to the heart of the bashful stripling.

There was no resisting Miss Laura's kindness, Miss Laura's winning ways. If she went out for a walk, or wished to go shopping, she could not think of going alone; no, she invariably called on him. If she wanted anything brought from down town (which she did very frequently) she begged the favor of him. And, finally, in a fit of desperation, when he talked of going home, and "guessed as how he shouldn't settle there, but would go out West," she vowed she could not live without him.

What mattered it that she was several years older than he? What mattered it that he was half a head shorter than she? "What would the world say if she were an old maid?" Aye, that was it! and, in spite of all disparity, Laura became Mrs. Peter Jinkins.

CHAPTER XIII.

BLUE STOCKINGS AND BRIDES,

"And so Amy still retains her *penchant* for writing poetry. I believe she is afraid of my ridicule, and that is why she has always concealed her verses from me," said

William Clayton to Catharine, as they stood one day looking over some manuscript.

"Yes, you always teased her so much about being a poetess, and so often called her *bas bleu*, that she is rather shy of you."

"Well, there is a goodly pile of paper here, and some of the lines are thoughtful and sad to have been written by so young a girl."

"But Amy is not like the generality of young girls. Child as she was when our dear father was taken from us, his death made a deep and vivid impression upon her mind, and she never reverts to the painful events of that night without a shudder. Her early training in the school of sorrow has made her thoughtful beyond her years; but those deep and solemn thoughts are hidden within her heart, only to be breathed forth in verse. In daily life, Amy's warm and joyous nature makes her a very sunbeam in our path."

"I know it, Catharine, and Heaven grant she may ever be as now, the light of our home, the pride of our hearts. Here are some lines which purport to have been written after losing a young friend to whom she was tenderly attached:"

Thou comest in strange beauty,
  Like a star-gleam on the sea,
And memory's shadows round thee fall
  All soft and silently.

Thou comest in the freshness
  Of thy unsullied worth,
Like angel ones who smile upon
  The dwellers on this earth.

Thou comest in thy sweetness,
  Which all unearthly seems,
Like lovely visions which but haunt
  The beauteous world of dreams.

Thou comest in thy brightness,
  Like golden hues of even,
Which, as we gaze in ecstasy,
  Lose all their light in heaven.

Thou comest, and the tear-drops
  Are gathering in mine eye.
I thought not when I saw thee last
  That thou so soon shouldst die!

Thou comest in the midnight,
  When every glittering star
Shines out a world of glorious light
  Where sinless spirits are.

Thou comest when the day-beam
  Breaks forth from darkness free,
Thou'rt ever with me, sainted one,
  As other ne'er can be.

Thou comest, and I know thou art
  A worshipper on high,
For every thought of thee is linked
  With glories of the sky.

Thou comest, and I pray to be
  Admitted where thou art,
In presence of th' Eternal One,
  Where dwell the pure in heart.

"Let us put away these manuscripts now," said Catharine, when they had finished reading the lines, "and when we have more leisure I will show you some verses of Amy's which have been published."

"Published! and by our Amy? why she is not seventeen!"

"A *young* poetess, I grant you, but girls will feel, and think, and write, at seventeen," said Catharine, taking some magazines and papers from a book-shelf.

"I see by the signatures that all these have been sent anonymously."

"Why you don't suppose that our timid, shrinking Amy could ever find courage enough to avow herself an authoress? You know how much ridicule has been thrown, by the small wits of the day, upon those whom they are pleased to term 'blue stockings,' and Amy is yet too young, and too timid, to treat such twattle with the contempt it deserves. It is said that literary women are slovenly and pedantic, and make miserable housekeepers. Now I venture to affirm, that the woman who is slovenly as a writer would be equally so if she never put pen to paper—that the woman who is pedantic, using big words to express common ideas, and displaying her learning on unsuitable occasions, does so, not because she knows too much, but too little—and that the literary woman who is a bad housekeeper would be a still worse one if she were an ignoramus. Because a woman in her leisure moments jots down what is passing through her brain, it does not follow that she cannot (if need be) concoct a pudding, or make a pie, or get a comfortable meal for her husband, or mend her children's clothes, or do any other thing equally useful. When the hands are employed in domestic duties, the mind cannot be idle, and surely it is better to let it roam 'fancy free' than to chain it down to counting the stitches in a seam, or the bubbles on a pot."

'Bravo, Kate! henceforth you shall be the champion

of the 'Blues.' Badinage aside, I confess it has been too much the fashion to decry lady writers, but depend upon it, it has only been done by men of narrow and illiberal mind. Such men are generally ignorant and conceited, and unwilling to allow any superiority to woman. The man whose intellectual powers have been highly cultivated, whose mind and heart are enlarged, feels no such petty jealousy. He has no fear that woman will outrival him, even in the lighter departments of literature, and an ignorant woman, however pretty she may be, can never maintain a power over his heart."

"Why, my dear brother," said Catharine, in a tone of mock seriousness, "how strangely you talk! A lady, who knew my fondness for reading, once said to me, 'Why do you read so much? Depend upon it you'll never get married; the men don't like women who know too much.'"

"Well, Catharine, that from one of your own sex should have been conclusive. But this speaking of marriage reminds me of Lester; when may we expect him?" Catharine blushed. "Do not blush, Kate; had you a letter this week? Fy! what a tell-tale face you have. I really wish Lester were here, he might help us to solve this mystery about the money sent to mother for my education. Ah, there are mother and Amy, I'll ask them when you heard from him."

"O, Catharine, dear Catharine, we have just come from Mrs. Clinton's, and she says the vessel is below; and they are all overjoyed for your sake, dear sister."

"What vessel, Amy?" said her brother, "what vessel are you speaking about?"

"The packet that Mr. Lester's coming in—has not Catharine told you? She had a letter by the last steamer."

Catharine was startled by this sudden intelligence, for she had not expected the vessel so soon, and she sat down faint from emotion.

"There is Lester now!" exclaimed William, darting to the door.

Catharine could neither speak nor move, and the next moment Lester caught her in his arms.

"My dear girl! my own Kate! My dear Mrs. Clayton! Amy! William! All here—all spared! Thank God!—thank God!"

It was some time before either of the group was sufficiently composed to speak with anything like coherency. Five years had Lester remained in England, faithful to his promise not to leave it while his grandfather was living. Often, when he had written of his ardent desire to return, one word from Catharine would have brought him to her side, but she encouraged him in his resolution, and besought him not to leave the old man who doated on him. In the meantime she remained with Mrs. Clinton, and the liberal salary allowed her by that lady enabled her to maintain her mother in a plain, genteel style of living, without Mrs. Clayton being obliged to use any exertion but such as her health permitted. William had been nearly three years in the Theological Seminary, and at the expiration of the fourth was to receive ordination; and Amy had grown a beautiful and accomplished girl, almost a woman, without losing any of the warm, frank-hearted truthfulness which had made her so engaging when a child. What a long, long talk had Edward and Catharine together, when the rest of the family considerately withdrew, and left them to themselves. What fears that they should

never meet—what hopes and prayers that they might—had been theirs during those five long years!

"And did you never doubt me, Catharine, as year after year went by without my returning?"

"Never for a moment, Edward—how could I, dearest, after—"

The rest of Catharine's answer was smothered on her lips, and Edward Lester, even with his added five years, forgot his usual stately demeanor as he repeated "dearest!" and added, "my own sweet Kate!"

We will not linger over our tale, though we could relate much that would find an echo in every loving heart—much that would bring back the bright visions of their youth to the sober matron and the man of middle age—and much that would make the old look back over a long lapse of years, and give a sigh to the past.

"Happy is the bride that the sun shines on," and never was there a brighter sun than that which shone through the church window, and fell on the white vestments of the priest, and never was there happier bride than Catharine Clayton as she knelt and pronounced those vows which made her Lester's for life.

Her wildest dreams—dreams that had haunted her when a girl, that had clung to her through the darkest hours of her destitution—were now realized. She had a home, a happy home, for her mother, her brother, and Amy!

The following summer William was ordained, and, after repeating, for the hundredth time, his wish to know who was his generous benefactor, Catharine whispered the secret in his ear.

"Lester? Why did I not think of him? Dear,

generous Lester! And how long have you known this, Catharine?"

"Only since your ordination. Edward had determined on not telling it before, nor would he have ever told it had we not been married, for he knew your aversion to being under obligations to any but your dearest friends."

"Dear Lester, how can I ever repay your kindness?" said William, turning to his brother-in-law, who was entering the room.

"By standing godfather to my little Willie," answered Edward, pointing to a chubby urchin who was sleeping soundly in his cradle, by which Amy was seated.

"Ha! my young poetess—caught at last!" and Lester playfully drew forth a slip of paper, the end of which was peeping out of Amy's pocket. "Lines to a Sleeping Infant!" "Here, William, read them. Nay, Amy, if you are not afraid of Graham, or the Knickerbocker, why should you be afraid of us? Read, William."

But before William could commence, Julia and Emily Clinton entered—and Amy slipping slily behind her brother, seized the paper and put it again in her pocket. William and Emily chanced somehow to be left by themselves, while the other members of the party, with Mrs. Clayton, who had joined them, were grouped around the baby, who began to give audible signs of wakefulness.

"You remember what you promised, Emily, as soon as I obtained a church and a parsonage!"

Emily blushed, and glanced timidly around to see if they were observed, but all seemed lost in their admiration of the infant, and totally forgetful of the presence of William and herself. What was the promise to which he had alluded? Simply this—that Emily Clinton had prom-

ised to be his wife as soon as he had obtained the charge of a congregation.

"Well, I declare!" said Mrs. Hardy, to one of her friends—"Well, I declare! Mrs. Clinton is the strangest woman in the world! Why, I hear that her daughter Emily is engaged to William Clayton. Only to think of her allowing one of her girls to marry the brother of a governess! And he is poor, too, with nothing but his profession to depend on—nothing but the salary he will receive as a clergyman! What *will* the world say?"

But how little was Mrs. Clinton, or her friends the Claytons, influenced by the opinions of those whom Mrs. Hardy styled "the world!"

Through a life of unbounded prosperity, Mrs. Clinton had ever been mild, gentle, and unassuming; treating the lowliest of her fellow-creatures as beings who had been made by the same God, who had been redeemed by the same Saviour, and who should be judged by the same Judge as she herself. Never, when visiting the abodes of the destitute, or when welcoming with frank cordiality the poor in purse but gifted in intellect to her elegant home, did she fear compromising her own dignity by so doing, nor pause to ask, "what will the world say?"

Through bitter trials, through years of adversity, the Claytons had always retained their self-respect. They had never cringed to the wealthy, nor done aught that partook of meanness. They had not spent their time in useless and sinful repinings, but with humble and trusting, though often saddened hearts, had relied on that Almighty Providence whose care is over all his creatures. And why should they, firm in their integrity, pause to ask, "what will the world say?"

In less than six months after William Clayton's ordination, another bridal party entered the church; the sun shone gloriously on another bride, and a dearer link was added to the chain which bound the Clintons to the Governess.

Paul Talbot;

OR,

THE UNFINISHED PICTURE.

CHAPTER I.

O God! to clasp those fingers close,
And yet to feel so lonely!
To see a light on dearest brows,
Which is the daylight only!

ELIZABETH B. BARRETT.

I WAS sitting one morning in the library of a friend, looking over a valuable collection of works of art, made during a five years residence abroad, and listening to his animated description of scenes and places now become familiar to every one who reads at all, through the medium of "Jottings," "Impressions," and "Travels," with which the press abounds.

Among the paintings were small copies in oil from Corregio, Guercino, Guido, and Rafaelle. There was a head of the latter, copied from a portrait painted by himself, and preserved in the Pitti Palace. With the slightest shade of hectic on the cheek, and the large unfathomable eyes looking into the great Beyond, it was truly angelic in

its loveliness. No wonder the man for whom nature had done so much, and who delighted in portraying the loftiest ideal beauty, no wonder he was called "divine!"

On one side of the room, in which we were conversing, stood a picture apart from all the others, which soon engrossed my entire attention. A young man was represented reclining on a couch, and wrapped in a robe falling in loose folds about his person. His countenance bore the traces of suffering, but his dark eyes were filled with the light of love, and hope, as they looked up into the face of a young female bending mournfully at his side. On the head of this female the artist had lavished all the love of genius. With the sunny hair parted on the fair forehead, and the rich braids simply confined by a silver arrow—the dark eyes from which the tears seemed about to fall—the half-parted lips quivering as if from intense emotion—oh, it was transcendently lovely! The rest of the figure was in outline, but as vividly portrayed as some of those wonderful illustrations by Flaxman, in which a single line reveals a story.

"How is this," said I, after gazing long and earnestly upon it, "how is this?—why is the picture unfinished. And who was the painter?"

"The tale," replied my friend, "is a sad one; and if you are tired of looking at pictures and medals, I will relate it to you."

"Not tired, yet I should like to hear the story to which this picture imparts an unusual interest."

"You remember Paul Talbot, who left here some years ago to pursue the study of his art abroad."

"I do, but that young man—sick—almost dying—I thought the face a familiar one; but can that be Paul?"

"Alas! yes—he is dead!" and my friend dashed away a tear as he spoke.

"Dead!" repeated I. "Paul Talbot dead! when did he die?"

"Not long before my return. Poor fellow! he endured much, and his career was an exemplification of what a man of untiring energy can accomplish under the most adverse circumstances.

"Soon after the birth of Paul, his father died, leaving little, save a mother's love and a stainless reputation to his infant son.

"Mr. Talbot was a man of refined taste, and had collected round him objects of which an amateur might be justly proud—and thus from childhood had been fostered Paul's love for the beautiful.

"Well educated and accomplished, Mrs. Talbot undertook the tuition of her child, and by giving lessons in drawing, painting miniatures on ivory, and small portraits in oil, kept herself and her boy above the pressure of want. Carefully she instilled into his tender mind those lofty principles of rectitude, of uncomprising integrity, and that childlike trust in the goodness of an overruling Providence, which sustained him through all the trials of after years.

"How holy, how powerful is the influence of a mother! The father may do much, but the mother can do more toward the formation of the mind, and the habits of early childhood. Exercising a power, silent, yet refreshing as the dews of heaven, her least word, her lightest look, sinks deep into the hearts of her children, and moulds them to her will. How many men have owed all that has made them great to the early teachings of a mother's love! The father, necessarily occupied with business or professional

duties, cannot give the needful attention to the minor shades in the character and disposition of his little ones, but the mother can encourage and draw out the latent energies of the timid, can check the bold, and exert an influence which may be felt not only through time, but through eternity.

"It was beautiful to see Paul Talbot standing by his mother's side, with his childish gaze fixed upon her face, while receiving instruction from her lips, and to hear him as he grew in years, wishing he was a man, that he might be enabled to supply her every want.

"'You know,' he would exclaim, while his fine eyes were flashing with enthusiasm, 'that I will be an artist; and, oh, mother, if I could, like Washington Allston, be a painter-poet; could I but paint such a head as that we saw in the Academy, and write such a book as Monaldi, then, mother, I would gain fame; orders would crowd upon me—and then—then we would go to Italy!'

"Go to Italy! of this he thought by day, and dreamed by night; and to accomplish this was the crowning ambition of the boy's life.

"He was willing to toil, to endure privation and fatigue, could he but visit that land where heavenly beauty is depicted on the canvas, where the marble wants but the clasp of him of old to warm it into life, and where the soft blue of the sky, and the delicious atmosphere brooding over the glories of centuries gone by, make it the Mecca of the artist's heart.

"But amid all these dreams of the future, all these ambitious aspirings of the gifted youth, death cast his dark shadow over that peaceful dwelling, and the mother,

the guardian angel of the fatherless boy, was borne away to be a dweller in the silent land.

"With what passionate earnestness did he call upon her name. How did he long to lie down by her side. His mother! his mother! she had taught his lisping accents their first prayer; she had watched over his little bed, and moistened his parched lips when he was ill with fever—so ill, that his mother's watchful tenderness was all, under God, that saved him from the grave. As he grew older, she had spoken to him, not like the boy he was in years, but like the man to whom she could impart her thoughts, and with whose mind of almost premature development, she might hold converse, and feel herself understood. And now, in his fifteenth year, when he was thinking of all that he could, nay, of all that he *would* do for her, his mother had died! Who can wonder that the boy pined, and sat upon her grave, and longed for her companionship, and wept as if his heart must break.

CHAPTER II.

Then all the charm
Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair
Vanished, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each misshapes the other.—COLERIDGE.

"ABSTRACTED in his habits, quiet and sensitive, from his reveries in dream-land, the orphan woke to find himself the inmate of a new home.

"Mrs. Winter, the only sister of the late Mr. Talbot,

was wholly unlike her brother. With little taste for the elegancies of life, except so far as she thought their possession would give her importance in the eyes of others, with no sympathy for any ambition save that of acquiring money, she looked with no very favorable eye on her brother's orphan. Dazzled by the prospect of a carriage, a town and country-house in perspective, she had married a man of sixty, when she was barely sixteen, and could never forgive her brother for not falling in with her scheme of catching the rich heiress, who, she avowed, waited but the asking to change the name of Miss Patty Pringle, for the more lofty-sounding title of Mrs. Percy Talbot. But Percy Talbot preferred the portionless Isabel Morton, and the monotony of a counting-room, to the bank-stock, real estate, and soulless face of Miss Patty Pringle. Hence there was but little intercourse between the brother and sister, and when the younger Talbot sought the shelter of his aunt's roof she animadverted with great bitterness on the folly of people gratifying a taste for luxuries beyond their means, and encouraging boys without a shilling to spend their time in reading books and daubing canvas.

"Nor could Mrs. Winter refrain from talking of stupidity, when Paul sat quietly at his drawing, while her own sons were making the house ring with their boisterous mirth. The boys, catching the spirit of their mother, ridiculed Paul's sketches, and with the petty tyranny of little minds, subjected him to every annoyance, and taunted him with his dependent state. The proud, sensitive boy, writhed under such treatment, and determined on leaving the relatives who had neither tastes nor sympathies in common with his own.

"When at the age of twelve years he hung over the landscape he was trying to imitate, and from which no boyish sports could lure him; when he saw the sketch grow beneath his touch, and look more and more like the original, until, in the exultation of his young heart, he exclaimed, 'I knew that I could do it, if I did but try,' he unconsciously displayed that perseverance of character without which no one can hope to attain eminence. And now that same energy was employed in seeking means to gain a livelihood without being subjected to the bitterness of insult.

"He succeeded in obtaining a situation, and in compensation for his services, received his board and a small salary. True, he had but little, but that little was his own; he had earned it, and a proud feeling of independence was his, when purchasing the scanty stock of drawing materials with money obtained by his own exertions. And so passed a few years, during which he diligently devoted himself to the business of his employer through the day, and to reading and drawing at night.

"The long-cherished hope of visiting Italy had never been abandoned, although the many obstacles in the way seemed almost insurmountable. But now a bright thought occurred to him; 'I will give up my situation; I will hire a room with the money already saved, and devote myself entirely to the pursuit of art. I will paint a picture —it will be placed in the exhibition—and then—' Talbot paused, and his cheek glowed, and his heart-pulse quickened as he looked into the future.

"The resolution once taken, he was not long in carrying it into effect; and day after day saw him at his easel, laboring with patient assiduity, and flattering himself that his picture would not pass unnoticed.

"When the day of exhibition arrived, Talbot walked nervously up and down the gallery where the pictures were hanging, every now and then glancing at his own, with the small ticket appended announcing it for sale, and pausing to observe if it attracted attention. But it had been placed in a bad light, directly beneath two brightly-tinted landscapes, and so low down that you were obliged to put one knee on the floor before it could be examined. Poor Paul! no one gave more than a passing glance to what had cost you weeks of patient labor, and the papers passed it by with merely announcing its name and number on the catalogue.

"What a rude dashing down of all his hopes was here! What a fading of the air-built castles he had taken such a delight in building? The land of promise had receded from his view, and the shores of Italy were as a far-off vision seen in the dimness of deepening twilight. Oh, what a sinking of the heart follows such disappointments! A goal is to be won—the aspirant rushes eagerly to the race—hope lures him on—he grows weary, oh, how weary—courage—the thrilling sound of fame's trumpet-peal is ringing on those heights afar—courage—one more struggle and the prize will be his own! One more struggle—and hope fades from his sight—and the last faint echo of fame's music dies upon his ear—and a dull lethargy seizes on his mind—and the pulses of his heart grow still and cold as the waveless, tideless surface of a deep, dark lake! Happy he who can shake off the despondency attendant on times like these, and, like the bird momentarily driven back by the storm, can plume his wings and dare a nobler flight.

CHAPTER III.

Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the Present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy Future, without fear, and with a manly heart.—LONGFELLOW.

"THE spirits of youth are elastic, and after great pressure will naturally rebound. 'Hope on, hope ever,' is a maxim seldom forgotten until age has chilled the blood and palsied the powers of life. After a few days spent in brooding over the present, Paul again looked forward to the future, and determined to seek some other avenue by which he might gather up a little, just a little, of the treasure which others possessed in such abundance. His fondness for literature suggested the idea that his pen might be employed with more profit than his pencil, and the periodicals of the day appeared to offer a wide field for exertion. But emolument from such sources was precarious at best. All who held an established reputation in the world of letters were contributors to the various popular publications, and Paul Talbot wanted the "magic of a *name*" to win *golden* opinions from the press. Sometimes he met with those who were more just and generous than others, and, thus encouraged, he toiled on, hoping, even against hope, that his desires would yet be accomplished.

"With many misgivings, and a fear that he had mistaken his vocation, he had taken his ill-fated picture to a place where engravings were kept for sale, and left it with the shopkeeper, promising to pay him one half the money

for which it might be sold. How discouraging to see it week after week in the window, until it began to look like a soiled fixture of the establishment. No one would ever buy it, that was certain, and if they would not purchase this his best work, how could he ever hope to dispose of others of less merit, which were standing round the walls of his little room? Alas, no! but when once in Italy—then he would paint pictures such as he dreamed of in imagination. For the present, with weary frame and throbbing brow, he must labor on.

"There are few but know

> 'How cruelly it tries a broken heart
> To see a mirth in anything it loves.'

And who that has ever walked forth on a particularly bright morning, when he was nursing a deep sorrow, or was weighed down by the pressure of misfortune, but felt annoyed by the light, and noise, and cheerfulness around him? Those vast tides of human life what are they to him? He is but a drop in a wave of the mighty ocean—but a pebble thrown upon the sand—a broken link in the great chain of the Universe. Thus felt Paul, as on one of the loveliest days of laughing June, he wended his way to the office where he had left a manuscript to be examined by the publisher.

"'How can those people look so smilingly,' thought he, while glancing at the well-dressed groups on the side-walk. 'And those children, how noisy they are—and see that carriage with its liveried attendants—pshaw!' Now Paul was not envious, and he was particularly fond of children, but the feeling of loneliness in the crowd was oppressive,

and with another half audible pshaw! he turned into a quieter street.

"The smiling face of the great man who employed so many subordinates in his large establishment, somewhat reassured the desponding youth, and after a little preliminary talk about encouraging native talent, a sum was offered, which, though small in itself, was just then a god-send to the needy Paul, who with many thanks bowed himself out of the publisher's presence. One ray of light had dawned on his darkened path, one beam of hope had shed its warmth upon his heart, and how differently now looked the scene through which he had lately passed! With buoyant step he went on. He, too, could smile,—the darling little ones, how delighted he was to see them looking so happy—and the poor blind man at the corner must not be forgotten! Like the child who plays with the kaleidoscope, and every moment sees some new beauty, so Paul toyed with the many colored hues in the rainbow of Hope, grouping them together in the most beautiful and dazzling forms.

"It was destined to be a red-letter day in his book of life. As he passed the print-shop he saw that his picture was gone from the window. It had been sold, and a companion-piece ordered by the purchaser. 'Oh that my mother were living!' sighed Paul—'oh that my mother were living, we might yet go to Italy!'

"Again the painter laid aside his pen and resumed his palette. The one order was executed, the money transferred to his slender purse, and even now he began to think how much might be put aside for his darling project.

"'Could I but obtain enough to pay for my passage—once there, in that delicious climate, I could live on so

little. Oh that some one would buy this,' he continued, taking up a small picture on which he had bestowed unusual care, 'it is worth more than either of the others. I shall leave it with the kind Mr. Barry; how generous he was in refusing the commission I promised him for the last one he sold.'

"Mr. Barry, at whose print-shop Paul had left his first picture, had kindly drawn from him the story of his life, and felt deeply interested in the young artist's changing fortunes, but, like many other generous-hearted men, he was always forming schemes for the benefit of others, which his means would not permit him to accomplish.

"The kind man had just reared a goodly superstructure of greatness, upon a rather sandy foundation, for his young protégé, when Paul entered with the new work fresh from his easel.

"'Why, Talbot,' said he, cordially grasping the painter's hand, 'this is capital! and I consider myself a tolerably good judge. When younger, I was in the employ of a picture-dealer, who pursued the profitable business of making old pictures look like new, and the still more profitable one of making new pictures look like old. You stare, it is a fact, I assure you. To a Madonna, that had been bought for a trifling sum, I had the honor of imparting a time-worn tinge, which so took the fancy of an amateur, that he paid five hundred dollars for it at auction. But I never could endure cheating, so I left the picture manufactory, and commenced the sale of prints on my own account.'

"'Do you think there is any chance of selling this landscape?' inquired Paul. 'I will take fifteen dollars for it.'

"'Why, Talbot, you are foolish, it is worth at least fifty.'

"'Ah, no one would give me so large a sum for a picture; fifty dollars! that would almost take me to Italy.'

"'Well, well, my dear fellow, it is said Providence helps those who help themselves, and you are sure to be helped in some way or other. I was thinking about you this morning, and wrote a note of introduction to Mr. C., who is a great patron of the Fine Arts. I have told him of your desire to go abroad, and how you are situated—'

"'Nay, nay, my kind friend,' interrupted Paul, 'this looks too much like begging a favor; remember I cannot sacrifice my independence, even to secure the accomplishment of my most ardent wishes.'

"'You are wrong, Talbot, you do not solicit him for aid; he has a taste for art, and if he gives you money, you return an equivalent in your picture, so that the obligation is mutual.'

"Paul was persuaded, and, bearing his friend's letter, bent his way to a fine-looking house, a long way from his own abode. Upon ringing the bell, he was informed by the servant that the family were at dinner. Leaving the letter with the waiter, he desired him to hand it to Mr. C., and say that Mr. Talbot would call to-morrow evening. The next evening Mr. C. was engaged, and on the next, when Paul was ushered into the drawing-room, and his name announced, he received a stately and patronizing bow from a short, stout gentleman, who stood with his back to the fire, conversing with three or four more who were seated near him.

"'Take a seat, sir,' and the short man waived his hand toward the intruder, and resumed the conversation thus momentarily interrupted.

"Paul grew nervous, and taking advantage of a pause he rose, and bowing slightly, advanced toward Mr. C. for the purpose of speaking. The latter began first—'I have looked over Mr. Barry's letter, young man, and hardly think it will be in my power to assist you.'

"'I came not seeking assistance, sir,' replied Paul; 'my friend Mr. Barry thought you might perhaps wish to add another picture to your collection, and, as I purpose going abroad, assured me that you would cheerfully give a few lines of introduction to your young countrymen.'

"Well, well, we will see, we will see, but all you young men have taken it into your heads that you must travel, and this makes so many applicants.'

"'Applicants!' the word stung Paul to the quick, and again bowing to Mr. C., he left the apartment. Once in the free air of heaven, he gave vent to his suppressed feelings, and vowed that should be his first and last visit to a patron.

"Barry was indignant when he heard the non-success of his young friend. 'Why, Talbot, that man's name is bruited abroad as a most liberal patron of art, a fosterer of early genius, an encourager of native talent—how I have been deceived!'

"'Never mind, my dear friend, you will sell the picture to some one else, and I will conquer yet.'

"And Paul Talbot did conquer. When another year had gone by, he stood with the hand of his friend Barry clasped in his own, returning the warm 'God bless you,' fervently uttered by the old man in that hour of parting.

"In a wild tumult of feeling, half joy, half sorrow, he stood upon the deck of the vessel, and watched the shores of his native land as they faded in the distance.

'The sails were filled, and fair the light winds blew,
As glad to waft him from his native home.'

And now he is on the ocean—the waves are dashing against the ship and bearing him onward—whither? To the land of his hopes. To the land of his dreams. Why each moment does he grow sadder and sadder? Why, as the crescent moon rises serenely in the heavens, does he press his eyelids down to shut her beauty from his sight.?

"'Oh, that my mother were here! Great God? yon moon is shining on my mother's grave!'

CHAPTER IV.

Wilt thou take measure of such minds as these,
Or sound, with plummet line, the artist heart?

MRS. NORTON.

It's holy flame forever burneth,
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth;
Too oft at times a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times opprest;
It here is tried and purified,
Then hath in heaven its perfect rest!
It soweth here with toil and care,
But the harvest time of love is there.

SOUTHEY.

"PAUL Talbot is in the city of wonders. Ivy-girdled ruins of the time-embalming past are lying in the distance. Lofty basilicas—their altars rich in votive offerings, of surpassing magnificence, surround him on every side. Stately palaces—their long galleries filled with the noblest works of the mighty minds of old,—are baring their treasures to his gaze. The 'dew-dropping coolness' of

each marble fountain gives new vigor to his frame. He is excited, bewildered, dazzled and drunk with beauty; and for weeks Paul wanders about Rome and its environs, forgetful that his lot is still to struggle and to toil. When roused to action, he threw himself heart and soul into his art; and the consequence was a long and severe illness, brought on by that absorbing devotion which often kept him at his pursuits until the morning dawn peering into his room reminded him that he was weary and overtasked. For months he lay wasted by sickness, helpless at times as a feeble child; but nature triumphed over disease, and he wandered once more beneath the blue sky, and felt the kiss of the balmy air upon his pallid cheek.

"From his walks upon the Pincian Hill, Paul could look upon the vast pile of the Vatican, with its Sistine Chapel, rendered immortal by the genius of Michael Angelo. Through maze of temple, church and palace, were caught glimpses of the yellow Tiber, whose waves reflecting back the rose-hues of the setting sun, filled the artist's mind with dreams of gorgeous Venetian coloring, as he slowly descended towards the Porto del Popolo, and his favorite retreat in the gardens of the Borghese. Here, under the porch of Rafaelle's Casino, would he linger, and conjure up visions of the past. Around him thronged the spirits of the mighty dead. Painter, sculptor, poet,—crowned princes in the world of art! true prophets of the beautiful and good! They spoke to him of all that genius had achieved, of all that genius yet might do—soul answered soul, and inspiration made the weak one strong. 'I, too, will leave an imprint on the shore of time.' Thus resolving, with a return to health Paul returned with renewed ardor to his task, until the picture on which he had long

and earnestly labored was at length completed. He had chosen for his subject a scene representing the hermit Peter exhorting the people to join the Crusades. In their midst, with one arm outstretched, and the other raised to heaven, stood the enthusiast. On either side were grouped mailed knights, and stalwart forms, the tillers of the soil. One gentle lady, like the weeping Andromeda, was clinging to her lord, and a villager's wife held up her child for his father's last fond kiss. So admirable was the grouping, so animated and life-like the figure of the preacher, so eager and intense the emotion betrayed by the assembled multitude, that you listened to hear the eloquence that roused all Europe, and sent prince, peer and peasant to rescue the holy sepulchre from the hand of the Infidel, —to cast down the crescent of Mohammed, and to raise the cross of Christ!

"And now came that fame for which the young painter had toiled, and to which he had looked forward as his highest guerdon. Crowds were daily drawn to his *Atelier*, and artists who had themselves won a world-wide renown, bestowed their warmest praises upon the 'Hermit' of Paul Talbot.

"The following winter Paul passed in Florence, and day after day he might be seen wending his way across the Piazza Vecchia to the halls of the Uffizzi, where the Tribune, with its gems from the hands of Rafaelle, Michael Angelo and Titian, almost won him from the more distant gallery of the Pitti Palace. It was here that Paul formed an acquaintance with a Florentine merchant, who had spent the best years of his life in endeavoring to acquire a fortune equal to that of his ancestors, whose portraits now formed part of the collection belonging to the Grand Duke.

To obtain re-possession of these portraits, which necessity had compelled his family to part with, was now the Florentine's ambition; but they were gems of art, and could not be purchased. Failing in this, the merchant was anxious to possess copies, and having frequently observed Paul deeply engaged in contemplating the beauties of those treasured relics of the past, he engaged the young artist to paint for him the copies he desired. This commission led him often to Paul's studio, and his cultivated taste made him an appreciative possessor of the 'Hermit,' at a price which relieved the artist from fear of pecuniary embarrassment. Paul was requested to visit the house of the merchant, and select the most fitting place to display the work of which the fortunate possessor was so justly proud. He went, and in the picture gallery of the wealthy Florentine was opened a new page in the artist's book of life.

"Poets and painters have ever an eye for beauty in woman, and when Carlotta Doni entered the apartment, leaning on the arm of her father, Paul started as if one of the bright visions of his ideal world stood suddenly embodied before him. The lady, too, was for a moment half embarrassed, for the fame of the young painter had reached her ears, and, woman-like, she had been wondering if report spoke truly when it ascribed to him the dark, clustering locks, and the lustrous eyes of her own sunny south."

'Love's not a flower that grows on the dull earth;
Springs by the calendar; must wait for sun—
For rain; matures by parts—must take its time
To stem, to leaf, to bud, to blow. It owns
A richer soil, and boasts a quicker seed!
You look for it, and see it not; and lo!

E'en while you look the peerless flower is up,
Consummate in the birth!'

"Was it strange that Paul and Carlotta, both worshippers of the beautiful, with souls alive to the most holy sympathies of our nature, was it strange that they should love?

"Paul had hitherto lived for his art alone. Painting was the mistress he had ever wooed with intense devotion, but now another claimed his homage, and he bowed with a fervor little less than idolatrous at woman's shrine. Such a love could not long remain concealed. The father of Carlotta, though a patron of art, was yet a vain and purse-proud man. Hoping by his wealth to obtain a husband for his daughter among some of tho haughty but decayed nobility, he frowned on the artist, and forbade him his house. In secret the lovers plighted their troth, not knowing when they should meet again, and Paul left Florence with the resolve to win not fame alone, but wealth.

"At Rome he was enrolled a member of the Academy of St. Luke, for which honor he had been presented by Overbeck, the spiritually-minded Overbeck, who, himself, the son of a poet, has enriched his art with the divinely poetical conceptions of his own pencil. At Munich, one of his pictures was shown by Cornelius to the King of Bavaria, and purchased by that magnificent patron of art at a price far exceeding the painter's expectations. At Vienna, a similar success attended him, and he returned to Florence after an absence of six years, with fame and wealth enough for the foundation of a fortune.

"From Carlotta he rarely heard, but he knew her heart was his, and he had that faith in her character as a true

woman, which made him believe that no entreaties or commands of her father would induce her to wed another. And Paul was right. Carlotta Doni still remained unmarried. In her the budding loveliness of the girl had expanded into the fuller beauty of the woman; but Talbot was sadly altered. The feverish excitement—the continued toil—the broken rest—the anxiety of thought to which he had been subjected, undermined his health, and planted the seeds of that insidious disease, which, while it wastes the bodily strength, leaves the mind unimpaired, and the hope of the sufferer buoyant to the last. The father of Carlotta finding that neither persuasion nor coercion could make his high-souled daughter barter her love for a title, consented at last that she should become the bride of the artist; but many said the wily Florentine had given his consent the more readily, because he saw that Paul would not long be a barrier in the way of his ambition.

"Paul Talbot had buffeted the adverse waves of fortune; he had gained renown in a land filled with the most exquisite creations of the gifted; he had won a promised bride. Whence, in that bright hour loomed the one dark cloud that blotted the stars from the sky? Could it be the shadow of the tomb? Was death interweaving his gloomy cypress with the laurel on the painter's brow? Oh, no, no —he was but weary—he only wanted rest, and his powers would again be in full vigor. Then, with Carlotta at his side—with her smile to cheer him on—he would aim higher, and yet higher in his art.

"And the young wife was deceived. Although a nameless dread, a dark prescience lay heavy at her heart, she yet thought the bright flush on the cheek of Paul a sign of returning health. How tenderly and anxiously she watch-

ed lest he should fatigue himself at his easel, and how gently she chid, and lured him from his task into the open air of their beautiful garden.

"One of the days thus passed had been deliciously mild, and, although mid-winter, in that heavenly climate where flowers are ever blooming in the open air, each breeze was laden with the heavy odor of the orange blossom, and the fainter perfume of the Provence rose. Stepping lightly from the balcony, where with Paul she had been seated watching the piled-up masses of crimson, of purple, and of gold that hung like regal drapery round the couch of the westering sun, Carlotta pushed aside the opening blossoms of the night jasmine which intercepted her reach, and gathering a handful of rose-buds, carried them to Paul. He took the flowers from his wife, and looking mournfully upon them, said, 'When we cross the waters to visit my native land, we will take with us some of your precious roses, beloved, and beautify my mother's silent home; and now,' he continued, twining his arm round her waist, and leading her to the harp, 'sing me that little song I wrote while yet a student in old Rome.' Pressing her lips upon his brow, Carlotta seated herself, and sung the song, which she had set to music. The air was soft and melancholy, and the sweet tones of the singer were tremulous with emotion.

Fill high the festive bowl to-night,
In memory of former years,
And let the wine-cup foam as bright
As ere our eyes were dimmed with tears.

Pledge, pledge me those whose joyous smile
Around our happy circle shone,

Whose genial mirth would hours beguile,
Which, but for them, were sad and lone.

Those hours, those friends, those social ties,
They linger round me yet,
Like twilight clouds of golden dyes,
When summer suns have set.

Then fill the bowl—but while you drink,
In silence pledge all once so dear,
Nor let the gay ones round us think
We sigh for those who are not here.

"'My dear Paul,' said his wife, smiling through the tears with which, in spite of her efforts to repress them, her eyes were suffused, 'this sad song should be sung on the last night of the year, the night for which it was composed. It should be sung while the student-band of artists stood around, each holding the flower-wreathed goblet from which he might quaff in silence, while his heart-memories were wandering back to fatherland. Let me sing,'—she paused on seeing the deep melancholy depicted on her husband's countenance—'nay, forgive me for jesting, love, I know with whom are your thoughts to-night, and will not ask you to listen to a lighter strain.'

"A month went by winged with love and hope. Paul found himself growing weaker, but he looked forward to a sea-voyage as a sure means of restoring him to health. Carlotta was hastening her preparatory arrangements, willing to leave her home, willing to brave the perils of the deep, in the belief that old Ocean's life-inspiring wave would prove the fabled fountain of youth to her beloved. She had never seen consumption in any of its varied and sometimes beautiful forms. She knew not that the eye

could retain its lustre, that the cheek could glow with more than its usual brightness, that the heart could be lured by a false hope, until, like a red leaf of the forest, dropping suddenly from the topmost bough, the doomed one fell, stricken down in an unthought-of moment by the stern destroyer.

"One morning, when Paul had remained much longer than usual in his apartment, Carlotta sought him for the purpose of winning him abroad.

"He was lying asleep on a couch, where he must have thrown himself from very weariness, as one of the brushes with which he had been painting had fallen from his hand upon the floor. His wife softly approached. She stooped and kissed his lips. He opened his eyes, smiled lovingly upon her, and pointed to the picture.

"'You have made me too beautiful, dearest; this must be a copy of the image in your heart.'

"'Ah, I have not done you justice, you are far more lovely, my own wife, yes, far more lovely—my mother—my mother—' repeated Paul, dreamily. It was evident his thoughts were wandering.

"'You are exhausted, dear love; but sleep now, and I will watch beside you.'

Carlotta knelt down and laid her cheek on his. Afraid of disturbing him, some minutes elapsed ere she again raised her head and turned to look upon the sleeper. She took the hand that hung listlessly by his side. It was cold, and she thought to warm it by pressing it to her lips —to her cheek—to her heart. She bent her ear close to the sleeper—there was no sound; she laid her lips on his —oh, God! where was the warm breath? A horrible dread came over her, and unable from the intensity of her

agony to utter any cry, she sunk down and gazed fixedly in her husband's face, realizing the heart-touching thoughts of the poet,

'And still upon that face I look,
And think 'twill smile again,
And still the thought I cannot brook
That I must look in vain.'

"And thus were they found by her father, who was the first to enter the apartment. Paul quite dead—Carlotta lying to all appearance lifeless at his side—and before them the unfinished picture.

"When the fond wife was restored to consciousness, and felt the full weight of that misery that was crushing out her young life, her reason became unsettled. It was very sad to see her wandering from room to room as if in search of some lost object. She would frequently rise with a sudden start, walk hurriedly to the window, and stand for a long time in an attitude of fixed attention, then mournfully shaking her head to and fro, would slowly resume her accustomed seat, and in a low voice repeat 'not yet—not yet—Paul still lingers in Rome.' Carlotta remained in this melancholy state during the time I was in Florence, but a letter received since my return home informs me that after a short interval, in which reason resumed her sway, the sufferer calmly departed, coupling the name of her beloved with the rest and the bliss of Paradise.

"The wretched father was filled with self-upbraidings. But for him, he said, Paul Talbot might have been living, and his daughter living, happy in each other's love. He spoke truly. To gratify his ambition, Paul had overtasked the powers of life. The frail shrine was consumed by

the flame which for years had been scorching and burning into the heart and soul of the artist. Too late had he obtained his reward. Too late had Carlotta's father consented to her union with Paul. Too late had the old man found that by his daughter's alliance with a man of genius, a greater lustre would have shone upon his house than could ever be reflected from his glittering hoard."

Here ended my friend's narration, and while with him I lamented the fate of genius, I could not forbear blaming the conduct of the wealthy Florentine. Nor could I help thinking, that too often the golden ears betray the ass, while wisdom, virtue, talent, constitute the only real greatness.

Robert Dunning.

CHAPTER I.

AT the annual commencement of one of our colleges, the youth who delivered the valedictory had, by the vigor and beauty of thought displayed in his address, and by his polished and graceful elocution, drawn down the applause of the large audience assembled on that occasion. Not a few eyes were moistened as he bade farewell to the venerable men under whose care and tuition he had gained the highest honors, and to the schoolmates with whom he had passed so many happy hours, and who now, like barks again put forth to sea, that had long been safely moored in one quiet haven, were each to stem alone the torrent of life's great deep.

"He! he! he! that's Bobby Dunning, his father keeps a grocery store," said a foppish-looking stripling who wore the academic gown, as he pointed with his finger to the speaker on the platform, and at the same time seated himself beside a young lady in the gallery.

"He! he!" echoed his companion, "I dare say he has weighed many a pound of sugar in his time. A grocery store! What queer associates you have at college, Gus."

"Associates! No, indeed, Sophy; when Bob first entered I thought him a fine, generous fellow, and was just about to ask him to our house, when I found out who his father was. A lucky escape, by Jupiter! I soon cut his acquaintance, and made him feel by my cool, contemptuous manner that the son of a grocer was no fit associate for the son of a gentleman."

Again the young lady tittered, "That's just like you, Gus, you are always so high spirited."

"So my father says; he often calls me his 'gallant Hotspur,' and laughs heartily when he hears of my waggish pranks."

Many honors were that day borne away by the ambitious youths who had late and early sought to win them, but none were awarded to Gus, or as he liked best to write himself, Gustavus Adolphus Tremaine.

"Why, Gus, you're a lazy dog," said his father on their return home; "come, you must do better next time. And so Bob Dunning, the grocer's son, graduated to-day, and carried away more honors than any of the other students; rather strange that!"

"There was nothing strange about it, father. Bobby knew he had to get his living somehow or other, and as Latin and Greek smacked more of gentility than brown paper and pack-thread, he abandoned the latter, and took to the former with such avidity, that he has grown thin and pale as a shadow. A capital village pedagogue Bob will make, to be sure! But something more manly than poring over musty old books, or flogging ragged little boys, must be my occupation through life. I say, father, when does that race come off between Lady Helen and Bluebeard?"

"Next week," answered Mr. Tremaine, who was a member of a jockey club—"next week. Well remembered, Gus. I dine with the club to-day, and this devilish college concern had nearly driven the engagement out of my head. We are to have splendid arrangements on the race-ground for the accommodation of the ladies—a find stand erected, covered with an awning—wines, ices, patés, and I don't know what all. Sarah," turning to his wife, "I expect you to be there; mind, none of your vapors—and, Gus, do you bring Sophy Warren; she is a spirited creature, and would make a capital jockey herself." And with this equivocal compliment to Miss Sophia Warren, the elder Tremaine left the house.

A tyrant at home, a capital fellow abroad, was Oscar Tremaine. Over his wife, a mild, gentle creature, he had exercised his authority until she had become a perfect cipher in her own house; and, unnatural as it may appear, he had encouraged their son to flout his mother's opinions and scorn her advice. It was not strange, then, that Mrs. Tremaine had remained silent while her husband and son were speaking, but now, looking on the boy with tenderness, she said,

"I regret, my dear Gustavus, that you have not been more successful in your studies; how happy and how *proud* I should have been had you brought home some token of reward, some prize, on which I might have looked, and said, 'My child has won it!'"

"Fudge! this is all nonsense, mother. What do you know about such matters? Father has more money than I can ever spend, and why should I be compelled to mope away my lifetime over the *midnight oil*, as they call it? I'd rather have a canter on Fancy in the afternoon, and

then to the theatre or opera at night—that is the life for me;" and, humming a fashionable air, he turned from the room.

His mother gazed after him sorrowfully. "God help thee, my child!—alas! I fear the worst; God help thee!" she repeated in anguish, and, feeling how "sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child," she bowed her head on her hands, and wept bitterly.

In less than a month after the commencement, Robert Dunning began the study of the law, and Gustavus Adolphus Tremaine was expelled from college.

CHAPTER II.

"CONFOUND the fellow! I can't take up a newspaper without having his name staring me in the face. Eminent lawyer, superior talents — *superior* — nonsense; I don't believe a word of it. I always hated him;" and the speaker flung the offending paper on the floor, apparently unconscious that that very hatred made him blind to the merits of the man whom he so berated.

"What's the matter now, Gus?—angry again? Was there ever such a man?" exclaimed an ultra-fashionable lady, who swept into the apartment 'with all her bravery on.' "Come, I want you to go with me this morning, to select a new jewel-case. I saw a superb one the other day for a few hundred dollars; but I will have it, no matter what it may cost."

"It is a matter, and a serious one, too, Sophia. I told

you, six months ago, we should be ruined by your extravagance, and, by heaven! you must put a stop to it."

"And I told *you*, *twelve* months ago, Mr. Tremaine, that if you did not quit betting at the race ground and the gambling table, we should *certainly* be ruined. You spend thousands, for no earthly good whatever, while I only make use of hundreds, to purchase things absolutely necessary for one holding my position in society. Once for all, let me tell you, Mr. Tremaine, I will have whatever I want;" and, turning to the piano, the amiable lady ran her fingers over the keys, with the most provoking indifference.

"Mrs. Tremaine, you are enough to drive a man mad. Do you think I'm a fool, that I will bear to be treated thus?"

"Oh no, Gussy dear, I should be sorry to suppose such a thing; but you know the lesson by which I profited was learned in your home. There I saw how well your father could enact the tyrant, and how your gentle mother was treated like a slave; and I silently resolved, that from the hour we were married, I would be mistress in my own house."

"Where is the use of repeating that nonsense continually? I have heard the same story a dozen times before."

"And shall hear it a dozen times again, or at least as often as I hear the word *must* from your lips, Mr. Tremaine. But come, you have not yet told me why you were so angry when I came in. Let me see," she continued, taking up the newspaper, "let me see whether this will not solve the mystery. Ah, now I have it—Robert Dunning, Esq."

"Yes, now you have it—that upstart, whom I so hate—to see his name paraded in this manner before the public, is enough to drive me mad."

"No wonder you hate him, Gus. Only to think of his being retained as counsel for the heirs of old Latrobe, and gaining the suit by which you lost one hundred thousand dollars! Now this reminds me of what I heard yesterday, that Dunning was about to be married to Fanny Austin."

"Nonsense, Sophia, the Austins move in the first circles."

"So they do, my dear, but Fanny has strange ideas, and there is no knowing what freak she may perform. However, I shall drive there to-day, and ask her about it. I ordered the carriage at one—ah! there it is—will you assist me with my cloak, Mr. Tremaine, or shall I ring for my maid? Thank you—thank you—I don't know when I shall return."

"And I don't care," muttered her husband as she drove from the door. For a few moments he stood under the heavy crimson curtains at the window, looking listlessly in the direction in which the carriage had gone, and then taking his hat and cane left the house.

Just one little year had passed since Gustavus Tremaine and Sophia Warren were wedded—but one little year since he had promised to love and cherish her as his wife, and she had vowed to love and obey him as her husband, and yet such scenes as the one above related were daily occurring. The mother of young Tremaine had long since sunk broken-hearted to her grave, and his father had died in consequence of injuries received by falling from a staging erected on a race-course.

Shortly before the death of the elder Tremaine, the law-suit had terminated by which he lost one hundred thousand dollars, and on the settlement of his affairs it was found that but a comparatively small fortune would be possessed by his heir. Sophia Warren, "the capital jockey," prided herself on her marriage, with being wife to one of the richest men (that was to be) in the city, and it was a bitter disappointment when she found her husband's income would not be one-third of what she had anticipated.

As the union had not been one of affection—where heart and soul unite in uttering the solemn and holy vows —where "for richer for poorer" is uttered in all sincerity—as it had not been such a union, but one of eligibility —a question of mere worldly advantage, no wonder the peevish word, and the angry retort, were daily widening the breach between a spendthrift husband and an arrogant wife—no wonder each sought refuge in the world, from the *ennui* and the strife that awaited them at home—no wonder that the wife was recklessly whirling through the giddy maze of fashion, while the husband was risking health, honor, reputation, on the hazard of a die.

When Mrs. Tremaine reached Mr. Austin's, young Dunning was just leaving the house, so here was a fine opportunity for bantering Fanny Austin. "Ah! I've caught you, my dear, and Madam Rumor is likely to speak truth at last—ha! blushing! well this is confirmation strong—and it is really true that Mr. Dunning and Miss Austin are engaged?"

Too honest-hearted to prevaricate, too delicate-minded not to feel hurt at the familiar manner in which Mrs. Tremaine alluded to her engagement, Fanny remained

silent, her cheek glowing, and her bright eye proudly averted from the face of her visitor.

A woman of more delicate feeling than Mrs. Tremaine would have hesitated on witnessing the embarrassment caused by her remarks, but she had no such scruples, and continued,

"I contradicted the statement; for it was impossible to believe anything so absurd."

Fanny Austin looked up inquiringly, and the glow on her cheek deepened to crimson as she said,

"Absurd! may I ask your meaning, Mrs. Tremaine?"

"Why, I mean that you would not render yourself so ridiculous in the eyes of society. *You* marry Bob Dunning—the son of a grocer—*you*, who belong to the first families, and who ought to make a most advantageous match! Why, Fanny dear, no wonder I contradicted it."

"I regret that you took the trouble."

"Oh! it was none at all, and our families had been so long on friendly terms, that I thought it but right to say you would not throw yourself away."

"Allow me to ask why you speak in this manner," said Miss Austin, now fully roused, and recovering her self-possession; "if I should marry Mr. Dunning, how could I be thought to throw myself away?"

"What a question! Why the man has neither family nor fortune to boast of, while you have both."

"As far as money is concerned, I grant you I have the advantage; but as for family, few of us republicans can boast on that score. My grand-mother, and yours, too, Mrs. Tremaine, superintended their own dairies, made butter and cheese with their own hands, and sent them to market to be sold, nor did I ever hear that the good ladies

were ashamed of their domestic employments. Your father and mine commenced life with naught save probity and perseverance; they were first clerks, then junior partners, and at last great capitalists, and we their children have thus been placed at the head of society."

"I know nothing at all of this nonsensical grand-mother story about butter and cheese. I never heard of such a thing in our family."

"No, I suppose you did not. You have been taught to look on praiseworthy industry as derogatory to your ideas of gentility; but my father has always delighted in recurring to those days of boyhood, and he venerates the memory of his mother, whom he regarded while living as a pattern of domestic virtue."

"Oh, it is all nonsense talking in this way, Fanny. I wonder what Baron d' Haut-ton will say when he hears that the lady he wooed so unsuccessfully has been won by the heir of a man in the 'sugar line?'"

"Pardon me, Mrs. Tremaine, if I say you are forgetting yourself, or at least that you are presuming too far on your long acquaintance. My parents have no such ideas as yours, about fortune and family, and with their approval my heart is proud of its choice—proud, too, that it has been the chosen of the gifted, the noble-minded Dunning."

"Well, Fanny," persisted Mrs. Tremaine, nothing abashed by the gentle rebuke which had been given—"well, Fanny, depend upon it you will place yourself in a false position. The friends who are now eager to court the society of Miss Austin, will stand aloof when invited to the house of Mrs. Dunning."

"Friends! did you ever know a true friend do aught that would depreciate the husband in the eyes of his wife,

or lessen the wife in the esteem of her husband? For such of my so called friends as would not honor the man I had chosen, when he was well worthy of their highest regard, I can but say the sooner we part company the better. It is not the long array of names upon my visiting list of which I am proud, but the worth of those who proffer me their friendship."

"Two o'clock!" said Mrs. Tremaine, glancing at the *pendule* on the chimney-piece—"two o'clock! Good morning, Miss Austin. How surprised Tremaine will be to hear that you are really going to marry Bob Dunning."

And Robert Dunning and Fanny Austin were married —and never was there a happier home than theirs. The wife watched for her husband's step as the maiden watches for that of her lover. Daily she met him with smiles, while her heart throbbed with a love as warm and as pure as that she had vowed at the altar. And Robert Dunning idolized his wife, and his fine endowments drew around him a host of admirers and friends, until Fanny's former acquaintances, including Mrs. Tremaine, contended for the honor of an invitation to the gifted circle, which weekly met at the house of Mrs. Dunning.

CHAPTER III.

"So it has come at last—ruin, final, irretrievable ruin—everything gone—the very house I'm in mortgaged. Confusion! But I'll not give up yet—no, not yet! I'll see Browne to-night—what if we should fail? But that is

impossible. Browne has been too long engaged in getting his living from the dear public to let it scrutinize very closely the process by which the needful is obtained. If I thought I could win anything at play—but I have had such an infernal run of ill luck lately that there is no chance in that quarter. Well—well! There appears to be no alternative—and when it is once done, then ho! for England!"

Thus soliloquized Gustavus Tremaine, as he sat at a late hour in the morning sipping his coffee in his room, for his wife and he had long ceased to take their meals together. Separate rooms and separate tables had served to complete the estrangement which caprice and ill-temper had begun, and they now exhibited that pitiable spectacle of a house divided against itself. And what is more pitiable than to see those who should mutually encourage and support each other, who should bear one another's burdens, and in the spirit of blessed charity endure all things, and hope all things—what is more pitiable than to see them unkind, self-willed, bandying bitter sarcasms and rude reproaches?

Oh, that the duties, the responsibilities, the self-sacrifices of wedded life were better understood, their sacred character more fully appreciated, how would each home become a temple of love, each fireside an altar, on which was daily laid an offering of all the amenities, all the sweet charities of social life. How would the child who, in his early home, had heard none save kind words, had seen none but heart-warm deeds, who had been trained to habits of submission, and taught to yield the gratification of his own wishes for the good or the pleasure of others, taught to do this even as a child may be taught, in the meek spirit of the gospel

—how would such an one grow up a crown of glory to the hoary hairs of his parents, and a blessing to society. But, alas! the spirit of insubordination is rife in the world. The child spurns the yoke of domestic discipline, sets at naught the counsels of his father, and hearkens not to the voice of his mother—and the man disregards the voice of conscience, sets the laws of his country at defiance, and becomes an outcast and a felon!

It was a cold winter evening, and the heavy clouds were looming up in broad masses over the troubled sky, while the wind howled through every cranny, and sent the snow-mist, which began rapidly to descend, into the faces of the stray pedestrians who were either hardy enough to venture abroad in search of pleasure, or wretched enough to be obliged from dire necessity to leave their homes. Mr. Tremaine was among the few who were braving the fury of the storm. He had left his elegant but cheerless mansion in the upper part of the city, and sped onward, regardless alike of wind and snow, to the place of his destination.

It was the haunt of vice, but in no dark alley nor out-of-the-way nook did it seek to hide itself from public contempt. No—it reared its front unblushingly in the public thoroughfare—within sound of the church-going bell—it was fitted up with every luxury; silver and gold, polished marble, and costly hangings, in lavish profusion, adorned the place which fostered every malignant and evil passion, and made human beings, endowed with immortal souls, ripe for deeds of desperation. The man who robbed his employer, the defaulter, the forger, the destroyer of female virtue, the murderer, the suicide, each and all of these had been within its walls—each and all of these had taken their

first lessons in iniquity in that place, so truly and emphatically called a *hell*. And it was to this place of pollution that Tremaine was hastening. Here he had staked and lost, and cursed his ill luck; yet, with the desperate infatuation of a confirmed gamester, he had staked again and again, until all was gone. On entering he looked round with a furtive and eager glance, and, evidently disappointed, sauntered toward a roulette-table round which a crowd was standing.

"Do you play to-night?" The speaker was a tall, slender young man, scarcely past his minority, but with a wan, sickly countenance, and the premature stoop of old age. "Do you play to-night?" he repeated.

"I—I believe not," answered Tremaine, again glancing round the room.

"You are a foolish fellow; the fickle goddess may even now be turning the wheel in your favor. Come," he continued, laughing, "if you have not been at your banker's to-day, I can accommodate you with a few hundreds;" and he took a roll of bills from his pocket, and handed them to Tremaine.

"But when shall I return this, Gladsden?"

"Oh, a fortnight hence will be time enough."

Tremaine turned to the table and staked the money—he won; staked the whole amount—won again; the third time. "You had better stop now," whispered a voice in his ear. He turned, and saw the person for whom, a short time before, he had been looking so eagerly; but he was elated with success, and paid no heed to the speaker. The fourth—the fifth time, he won. Such a run of luck was most extraordinary; he trembled with excitement, and now

determined that he would try but once more, and, if successful, he might yet retrieve the past.

"Are you mad, Tremaine?—you surely will not risk all?" again whispered the voice.

"All or nothing. I am fortune's chief favorite to-night. All or nothing," repeated the gamester, as if communing with himself, "all or nothing!"

The bystanders looked on earnestly; for a few moments there was a dead silence—then Tremaine's face became livid, his brow contracted, and his lips compressed. He had risked all; he had gained—nothing!

"What a fool you have made of yourself!" once more whispered the ominous voice.

"Not a word, Browne; perhaps it needed this to make me wholly yours," replied Tremaine, as he walked through the crowd, which opened to let him and his companion pass. When in the street, the two walked on for a time in moody silence, which was first broken by Browne.

"Well, Tremaine, that last was a bad stake of yours, and may cost one of us the halter."

"Why, I thought you told me there would be no blood spilt?"

"Well, blood is rather ugly looking, I must confess; but if the man should wake?"

"Did you not say that you would have him well drugged?"

"I did, but by the slightest possible chance, I find it cannot be done!"

"How so?"

"You know it was expected that he would sail in the packet from this port, but I find he has determined on going by the steamer, and will start to-morrow morning

by the Boston railroad; so that we must do it now or never."

"Now or never be it, then. I am a ruined man, and ripe for mischief."

"Again the two walked on in silence, until they reached a fine looking house in the vicinity of the Battery. Here Browne applied his key to the night-latch, and in a few moments he and Tremaine had entered one of the upper rooms and locked the door.

"Where does he sleep?" abruptly inquired Tremaine.

"In the opposite room."

"And you are sure that you can effect an entrance without arousing any of the boarders?"

"*Sure!* I wish I was as sure that he would not wake," and Brown smiled contemptuously. "But you are not growing faint-hearted, eh, Tremaine? Come, here is something will give you courage, man;" and, taking a bottle from a side closet, he placed it on the table before them, and continued—"fifty thousand dollars! I saw him count it over this afternoon. What fools some men are! Because I flattered him, and pretended to take an interest in his love affair, he opened his whole heart, and, what was of far more value, his purse, and displayed its contents before me. But it grows late, and we must to business. Remember, when I have secured the money you are to take it and make your escape out of the house, while I shall return quietly to bed to lull suspicion, and to-morrow evening will meet you where we met to-night. Now do you hold this dark lantern while I open the lock. That will do—put it in my room again—so—all right; come in a little farther," continued he, in a low whisper, "we must be cautious—the money is under his pillow."

Stealthily approaching the bed of the unconscious sleeper, Browne put his hand softly under the pillow and drew forth a wallet. Thus far they were successful, but in groping their way out of the room, Browne stumbled and fell; the noise awoke the sleeping man, and the cries of "Help!—robbers!—help!" rang through the house. In one moment Browne was on his feet, in another in his room, where the money was given to Tremaine, and in the noise and confusion of hastily opening and shutting doors, the latter escaped.

It is unnecessary to detail the causes which led to the suspicion and arrest of Browne, and the implication of Tremaine. Suffice it that on the following evening, when entering the place in which he had appointed to meet his accomplice and divide the booty, Tremaine was taken into custody, and the money found in his possession.

Sophia was dressing for the opera. It was the first night on which she had laid aside the mourning worn for the loss of her parents, and, determined on appearing in a style of almost regal magnificence, she had placed a circlet of jewels on her brow, and a diamond bracelet was seen flashing on her arm amid the rich lace of a demi-sleeve as she reached out her hand to receive a note brought in by the servant. On opening it her agitation was extreme, and, hastily dismissing her attendants, she read over word by word the news of her husband's crime, and subsequent imprisonment.

And now was she tortured by conflicting emotions. She had never believed that her husband's affairs were in the ruinous state in which he had represented them to be—but she could no longer doubt. Crime had been committed—disgrace had fallen upon them—and then came the

thought, "Have I not helped to goad him on to ruin?" and pity for him brought a momentary forgetfulness of self—the woman was not wholly dead within her!

The next day the hateful news was bruited abroad that Tremaine, the dashing Tremaine, was imprisoned for robbery! His fashionable friends wisely shook their heads, and raised their hands, and uttered sundry exclamations. But they stood aloof—not one offered to go forward as bail for the unfortunate man. Not one of Mrs. Tremaine's gay lady visitors went to speak a word to the humbled woman as she sat writhing under her disgrace. But we forget—there was *one!* Fanny Dunning, like a ministering angel, strove to soothe and comfort her, promised that her husband would do his utmost to aid Mr. Tremaine, and, when the mortgage on the house was foreclosed, took the weeping Sophia to her own home, and was to her as a sister.

CHAPTER IV.

It was not in human nature to forget the repeated slights and insults with which Tremaine had sought to wound the feelings of his old schoolmate; but it was in human nature to imitate the divine Exemplar, to forgive injuries, and to return good for evil, and Robert Dunning promised Sophia that he would do all in his power to effect the liberation of her husband. For this purpose it became necessary that he should visit Tremaine in prison. But the culprit obstinately refused to see him, until at length, finding the time draw near when he would be pub-

licly arraigned at the bar, he consented to his admittance. Dunning gave him to understand that he must know the facts of the case, at the same time assuring him that he would plead his cause with pleasure, and that there was no doubt of his acquittal.

"The thing can be easily managed," said Tremaine, doggedly—"I intend to plead an *alibi*."

Dunning started.

"Is this necessary, Mr. Tremaine? I thought the charge could not be proven against you?"

"Nor can it, if you are the expert lawyer you are said to be."

"Mr. Tremaine, let us understand each other. Is it important that you should prove an *alibi*."

"It is."

"Then I regret that I cannot undertake your cause. I was still under the impression that you were innocent."

"And who dares say I am not? Did you, sir, come here to entrap me in my words? Who will dare say I am not innocent, when the most famous lawyer in town shall have proven that I was far from here on the night of the robbery?"

The last words were said in a sneering and almost contemptuous manner.

"I must repeat my regret that I cannot undertake your cause, while at the same time I assure you that I shall be silent as to what has transpired between us."

"Puppy!" exclaimed Tremaine, thoroughly enraged. "Who asked you to undertake it? Who asked you to come and thrust yourself upon me? Did I seek advice or assistance from you?"

"Mr. Tremaine," replied Dunning, with a calm and

gentlemanly dignity—" Mr. Tremaine, it is vain talking in this manner. I came to you in the spirit of kindness—but my errand has been a fruitless one."

Before Tremaine had time to reply, the door was opened by the keeper, and Dunning passed out of the cell.

It was with a heavy heart Fanny heard from her husband that he could not undertake to plead for the accused, and, gently as she could, she broke the sad news to Sophia. Browne and Tremaine were tried, convicted, and sentenced to the State Prison. And now the hand which had sinfully lavished thousands—the hand that had been kept so daintily white and soft—the hand of the " son of a gentleman," was roughly manacled, and linked to the brown, hard, weather-beaten hand of a fellow convict. He who had been the pampered heir of luxury was now to be the partaker of coarse fare—the daily companion of all that was base and vile—and the nightly dweller in the lone dark cell of a prison. He, the once flattered, courted, and caressed, was to pass shamefully from the haunts of his fellow-man, and, after a few exclamations of wonder and reproach, was finally to be forgotten.

But there was one secretly at work, one who had been spurned, one whose noble hand had been flung aside with contempt—and that one was now busily employed in writing petitions, in travelling to and fro, and doing all in his power to obtain the liberation of the man who had ever treated him with insult and scorn. At length he was successful, and Tremaine was pardoned on condition of his leaving the State. But for Browne, who had been recognized as an old offender, there were no attempts made to procure his release.

It was with mingled feelings of shame and defiance

that Tremaine ungraciously received the assurance of his freedom from the mouth of Dunning; for, the better to avoid observation, the latter went himself for the prisoner, brought him from his convict cell, and conveyed him to the warm hospitalities of a happy home, where he was received by Mrs. Dunning with that refined delicacy and unobtrusive kindness which soon placed him comparatively at ease in their society.

A strange and embarrassed meeting was that of Tremaine and his wife. Sophia's first impulse was to break out into invective against him who had thus brought disgrace and ruin, not only upon himself, but upon her. Better feelings, however, prevailed, for she had learned many a lesson of late, and had already begun to catch the kind and forgiving spirit of those with whom she dwelt; so, after a few moments hesitation, a few moments struggle between pride, anger, and womanly tenderness, she drew near to her husband, laid her head upon his bosom, and sobbed in very grief and sorrow of heart. "Sophia!" "Tremaine!" were the only words uttered during that first outburst of anguish. But soon the fountain of thought was unsealed, when, instead of taunts and mutual upbraidings, the bitter lessons learned in the school of adversity made them self-accusing, and willing to excuse each other.

But little time was given to make arrangements for the departure of Tremaine, who had determined not only on leaving the State but the country. Mr. and Mrs. Dunning wished Sophia to remain with them, at least until her husband had procured some situation which might afford him a competent support. But Sophia would not listen to this—she would go with him—"she could do many

things," she said, "to aid him." Fanny Dunning smiled, but she knew that Sophia was right in thus fulfilling her wifely duties, and both herself and her husband prepared everything necessary for the comfort of the voyagers.

It was a bright morning in May, when these true and tried friends accompanied Tremaine and his wife in the noble ship which bore them down the bay, and with many a warm tear and repeated blessing wished them a prosperous voyage to England, and returned to the city.

And now we cannot better conclude their story than by giving an extract from a letter, written some time after the occurrence of the events already related, by Mr. Tremaine to his friend *Judge* Dunning.

"I must congratulate you, my dear Dunning, on your elevation to the bench; but I must not allow myself to utter all the praises that are swelling at my heart, nor does it require words to convey to you my respect, my esteem, my gratitude, and my love—ay, my love—for I do love you as a brother.

"Sophy bids me haste and tell you our good fortune—Softly, dear wife, I will do so in a moment or two. You may perhaps recollect, my dear friend, that I wrote you how difficult it was for me to procure employment on my first arrival in Liverpool, and that this was mainly owing to my total ignorance of any kind of business. Indeed, had it not been for the few valuables belonging to my wife, which she cheerfully parted with, and had it not been for her kind and encouraging words, I should have yielded to despair. You know, too, my dear Dunning, that, glad to do anything in honesty, I at last obtained a situation as clerk in a grocery store.

"How often has my cheek burned with shame, at the

recollection of my silly contempt for trades-people, when I was worse than idling away my time at college? How often has my heart smote me when I thought of my conduct toward you, my noble-minded, my best earthly friend? But why repeat all this? You have long since forgiven me, and yet I never can forgive myself. And now for my good fortune. My employer has enlarged his business and taken me into partnership, so that I am in a fair way of being once more a rich man, (and may I not add, a wiser one?) and your little namesake here, Robert Dunning, who is standing at my knee, is in an equally fair way of remaining what he now is—*the son of a grocer.* Heaven grant that he may in everything resemble the man to whom his father once used the words as a term of reproach. This is now my highest earthly ambition for my boy, and I pray that my own lessons in the school of adversity may enable me to teach him to place a juster estimate on the empty distinctions of society, and to learn how true are the words of the poet—

> 'Honor and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well thy part, there all the honor lies.'"

Blanche Acheson.

CHAPTER I.

"WHAT a charming hawthorn hedge! I see the old gentleman has not forgotten his home sympathies in this land of his adoption. Would you believe, O'Neil, that my uncle actually sent to Fermanagh for the cuttings for that hedge? I remember the day when Luke Fehely, who had been one of my uncle's cotters, was sent to Counsellor Johnson with the request that he might be allowed to carry away the prunings of the old hawthorn, which had been the pride of Cherry Mount, once my uncle's hospitable home. The prunings were given, sent to this country, and, in a letter afterward received by my father, my uncle poured out his heart in thankfulness that he was once more permitted to inhale the fragrance of the white blossoms from dear Cherry Mount. By many, in this working-day-world, a hankering after the familiar and pleasant things of an early home, would be looked upon as sentimental and romantic; not so with the Irishman; he loves every blade of grass on which he has seen the dew twinkle in the calmness of a summer morning—every green hill over which his foot wandered in boyhood is an oasis in his memory—the river by which he sat in happy listlessness baiting

his hook for the young trout, glasses the blue heavens more beautifully than any other stream in the world—the fairy rings in the grass—and the fairy bridge across the waterfall, and the wild clefts by the seashore, where he shouted and laughed to awake the deep echoes, or where, in melancholy mood, his flute breathed the soul-thrilling music of his national melodies—where—where in the whole universe could he find aught so lovely ?"

"Upon my honor and word, Ned, you at least have brought your romance with you. Are we to stand any longer here, or will you at once try what reception we shall meet with ?"

The young man to whom these last words were addressed was above the middle height, with fair complexion, an expansive and intellectual forehead, shaded by hair of that soft, rich brown which seems as if the golden sunbeams floated in its meshes, eyes of deep blue, of a singularly mild and touching expression. At first glance you might suppose him inclined to melancholy, but the second look detected a mirthful expression lurking about the mouth, which proved him to be that not uncommon character among his countrymen, made up of mirth and sentiment, gay and sad by turns, with too much heart to permit them to pass unscathed through the trials of this life, and whose impulses are often at war with, and gain the mastery over, their judgment.

His companion was apparently younger, not so tall, with eyes and hair black as night, and with a look of such perfect joyousness, that one could not behold him without fancying he had given every thought to gaiety. "Mirth, with thee I mean to dwell," was written on every lineament of his handsome countenance.

They passed the hawthorn hedge, and were soon entering a noble gateway, on each side of which a stately elm threw its shade. As they approached the house in the balmy twilight of a delicious June evening, a low strain of music was heard, and

"O breathe not his name"

was warbled with such heart-touching pathos, that the strangers paused and stood riveted to the spot until the strain ceased. There were lights in the apartment whence the sounds proceeded, and through the open window they could look upon the group within Seated at the piano was a fair young girl, with a form of the most faultless proportions, and a face of exquisite beauty. Hanging over her, with the enamored yet uneasy expression of one to whom love is the plague-spot in the heart, was a man about thirty years of age; his figure was tall and commanding, and his perfectly chiseled-features were more than handsome; but the expression of his countenance was dark and sinister, and his flashing eye had so much of the devil in its furtive glances, that the favorable impression which might otherwise have been produced by his beauty, was totally destroyed. At a table, in the middle of the apartment, sat a man on whose head the snows of sixty winters had fallen so lightly that they had not chilled the warm blood which mantled in his cheek; he was looking over the daily papers, and occasionally addressing a remark to a lady near him, whose cap and kerchief showed her to be the mother and the matron. On an ottoman, her lap filled with flowers, her dark hair decked with a cluster of moss rose-buds, her face gladsome with one of those bright smiles which beam from a happy heart, reclined the

youngest of the group; a harp stood near her, over which was carelessly flung a wreath she had been weaving from the fragrant hoard of blossoms.

A Magdalene of Carlo Dolci, and one of Salvator Rosa's scenes of dark and magnificent grandeur were suspended from the walls; a small marble statue stood in a recess, near which was a bracket filled with volumes richly and tastefully bound. It was a home-scene, full of simple elegance and quiet beauty, and the elder of the two travellers stood gazing, lost in reverie, until aroused by the voice of his merry companion.

"Come, come, Ned, this will never do; if you can live upon sights and sounds, I cannot; if your uncle will only regale us with a sandwich or two, and a glass of good wine by way of a tonic, why then I'll listen to the music, and admire the ladies, as becometh a man of gallantry to do; but if not, I shall positively decamp, and take up my abode with mine host of the inn."

There was no need for putting this threat into execution, for when the strangers were announced, and the taller of the two introduced himself as Edward Ogilby, the son of Mr. Acheson's only sister, and his companion as Mr. Harry O'Neil, his very intimate friend, the heart of every member of the family expanded with kindness toward their guests, and a servant was despatched to the tavern to bring thence the young gentlemen's travelling trunks, for Mr. Acheson and his kind-hearted lady retained in all its freshness that hospitality which "reigns hearty and free" in the lordly dwellings of the rich, and the thatched cot of the peasant, throughout the whole extent of their own Green Isle.

We know of nothing more delightful than the meeting

of an individual, who has long been an exile from the land of his birth, with another who has but just crossed the Atlantic, and who brings news about everybody, and everything, in which the heart is most interested. What a shower of questions are asked! What old memories, treasured, and half slumbering in the shadows of the past, are again stirred up, and invested with new vividness and beauty! New links of affection are formed, old ones, on which time had imperceptibly laid his decaying touch, are re-riveted—the exile is once more young—he asks for those who grew up with himself, and is surprised to hear them spoken of as old men, and old women, belonging to another generation; he wonders to hear that the sea has carried away the sand-hills he had climbed when a boy, and thought imperishable; or that docks and warehouses have been built along the shore where was once his favorite bathing-place. These are strange things, and, as he listens, he shakes his head, and begins to feel that in twenty years Time plays strange antics; ever restless, ever busy, peopling and depopulating, rearing up solid edifices where once stood the green forest, or where rolled the water tide; letting in the moonbeams through chinks in walls which seemed to defy his touch—beautifying the crumbling turret-tower and the old bastion with fresh garlands from his treasure-world of lichen and ivy, and weaving love-bowers for the owl and the bat, where he once builded pleasure-halls for luxury, or bridal-chambers for the light-winged Eros.

CHAPTER II.

"WHAT think you now of Cousin Blanche? Is she still to be the idol of your dreams, Ned? She is beautiful, certainly, but such an icicle—heaven help the love-stricken swain to whom she is to be united! I infinitely prefer the laughing Mary, with her warm outbursts of feeling, 'the smile on her cheek and the tear in her eye,' she is all heart, and, like yourself, has a perfect passion for flowers; there, at least, your tastes are similar; it would be a pretty end to your adventure, if, instead of the lily, you should gain the rose. Arthur Conyngham—"

"What of Arthur Conyngham?"

"Ha, ha! so you are roused from your trance—there's magic in some names; I wonder whom Campbell was thinking of when he spoke so feelingly of the 'magic of a name'? I tell you what, Ned, I think he had some loveable little body in his mind's eye, some embodiment of glorious Tom Moore's 'Nora Creina,' and I positively believe her name was Mary."

"For heaven's sake, Harry, cease this trifling—it tortures me—from my very boyhood the thought of my Cousin Blanche has colored every object in life; it began in childish preference, it grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, until at last it became powerful enough to break the ties of home and country, and send me a wanderer to this strange land. What is the result? I find her lovelier, if possible, than my imagination had conceived, I find her all that I could wish the woman to be on

whom my soul was lavished—and—gracious heaven! I find her the betrothed of another! While there is strength left I must flee this place. I would spurn myself if I could once harbor the thought of playing the tempter, and winning her to swerve from her allegiance; no, my progress through life has hitherto been unstained by falsehood or deception, and, dear as is the stake, I would not play with counters even were I sure of winning."

"And do you intend leaving this charming place, where a month has glided by so rapidly, and where the kindness of your worthy relatives has partly reconciled me to a separation from the Wicklow belles?"

"And where the child-like gleefulness of a merry maiden will soon make you forget the leave-taking with your Dublin beauties; is it not so, Harry?"

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mary Acheson, who ran playfully up to her cousin, and threw over him a whole shower of freshly-gathered violets. Her face was flushed with her morning exercise, her dark tresses were thrown back from her brow, and as she stood with her gypsy bonnet hanging from her arm, and her light, girlish laugh ringing through the apartment, a pang struck to the heart of Henry O'Neil when he saw her cousin Edward gazing on her with undisguised admiration.

"What an indolent mortal you are, Edward; here have I been abroad these two hours, watching the glorious sun careering upward—trying to count the diamonds on the web of a huge garden spider that has taken up his abode in a large althea—chasing a humming-bird which was daintily quaffing his nectar from the woodbine—and gathering pansies to spell-bind thy home thoughts, cousin mine. Where is Blanche this bright morning? We were wont

to ramble together, but she has learned naughty things from you, Cousin Ned; she has grown almost as strange, and shy, and indolent as yourself."

"I am sorry, Mary, that I have been the cause of any change in your sister's habits," said her cousin, affecting a laugh, "but you forget that Blanche has more important objects to engage her attention than spiders and humming-birds, or even than pelting her cousin with two-faces-under-a-hood."

"I cry you mercy, coz! An't please you better, I will chase no more humming-birds—count no more dew-drops—gather no more heart's-ease—and, hark ye, I will be cold and stately, curtseying thus—and walking erect, after this fashion, with the air and tread of a tragedy queen—I doubt not but in time I shall be perfect as Mr. O'Neil's beautiful namesake, or the immortal Siddons herself." And so saying the merry girl left the room, and her laugh was soon heard on the lawn, where she was trying her speed with her favorite Carlo.

"What a joyous creature! Pray Heaven your life may ever pass thus happily, my dear Mary, my bright, my beautiful cousin."

These words were uttered by Edward in a low tone, and with evident emotion. He was startled by a deep sigh, and, on looking up, saw O'Neil standing in a recess near the window, watching every movement of the graceful and light-hearted being who had just left them. He found by Henry's embarrassed manner that he would rather not have been observed, and in a careless tone remarked,

"I believe we are to visit some of the most picturesque places in the island to-day; I wonder how we shall dispose of ourselves?"

"There will be no difficulty about the arrangement. Mr. Conyngham and Miss Acheson will drive together, Cousin Edward and his dear Mary ride on horseback, and Mr. O'Neil will take his place with papa and mamma in the carriage."

These trifling words were uttered in a tone of bitterness which confirmed Edward in his previous suspicion that his friend was fast losing his heart with Mary Acheson, but without noticing his manner, he laughingly said, that as Mr. O'Neil was the better horseman, he should resign to him the pleasure of escorting his gay cousin. Henry felt ashamed of his rudeness, and his ingenuous countenance showed the workings of a mind ill at ease; for a moment he had looked upon Edward Ogilby as his successful rival, and there was doubt and distrust springing up in his breast toward his early friend. He had forgotten their recent conversation, in which Edward had made known the nature of his feelings for his Cousin Blanche, and his purpose of quitting his uncle's house; he had forgotten everything but his own hidden affection, which was hourly gaining new strength for Mary, and which was jealously watching every word and every look bestowed upon her by her cousin. Toward Blanche, Ogilby's demeanor was gentle, respectful, distant, while he treated her sister with all the frank warm-heartedness of his ardent nature, and another moment's reflection chased the cloud from Harry's brow, and made him feel how ungenerous, and how unjust were his suspicions.

Cold and guarded as was Edward's conduct toward his Cousin Blanche, there was one who discovered in it more of passion than was meant to meet the eye, and that one was Arthur Conyngham. We have before said that with

him love was the plague-spot in the heart; he felt himself unworthy the pure being on whom he had placed his unhallowed affections; he knew that he was indebted to chance for the position he occupied, and was in daily dread of disclosures being made which would unmask his character, and lay it bare in all its hidden deformity. At a fashionable watering-place he had met with the family of Mr. Acheson, and timely assistance rendered to his eldest daughter, when her horse had taken fright, secured for him the gratitude of the parents, and afforded him an opportunity of ingratiating himself into the favor of Blanche, while his elegant exterior and fascinating manners completed his conquest over a heart to which suspicion was a stranger. Thus situated, it was no wonder that he dreaded the presence of one whom he felt to be infinitely superior to himself in all those qualities which render a man worthy of a woman's idolatry. He saw that Edward Ogilby possessed in reality that refinement of mind, and love of the beautiful, and high sense of honor which he only affected; affected because he knew Blanche Acheson would never be won by any man who was destitute of these qualities.

Conyngham was sitting alone in the library; before him lay an open volume, but his eyes were not on it; his mind was not engrossed with its contents, his whole air was gloomy and disturbed as he muttered—

"And does he think to hide his love from me? fool! can I not see the flush on his pale cheek when Blanche enters? does he not speak to her in a lower and gentler tone than to any other? does he not sit as if drinking in her very breath when she is singing those melodies so full of pathos and of passion? fool! cursed fool! if he dare to

cross my path, by yon heaven, the last drop of his treacherous heart-blood shall be drained for my revenge!"

"Mr. Conyngham — Mr. Conyngham — where in the name of wonder have you hid yourself? As usual—in the library—drinking from the pure well of English undefiled? No! as I live, pouring over that false-hearted sentimentalist Rousseau! How can you admire that selfish man?"

"All men are selfish, Mary, nor do I think the philosopher of Lausanne has any claim to pre-eminence in this common failing; and, even if he had, the beauty of his language, the delicious softness of his pictures, and the impassioned sentiment breathing through every page, would gain him favor with every one who did not wish to appear a saint."

"I have no wish to appear a saint, and yet I think there are few writers, if any, whose works have a more dangerous tendency than those of Rousseau; the voluptuousness of his imagery is veiled under the garb of sentiment, and the perusal of his books has a most enervating influence upon the undisciplined mind. What more bewitching picture of indolence than that which he gives of himself, floating in his boat on Lake Leman, and indulging in the most fantastic and idle reveries? With what flimsy, though specious sophistry does he endeavor to make that appear innocent, which the pure heart instinctively shrinks from as criminal, and—" Mary inadvertently raised her eyes, and saw Conyngham's looks riveted on her face.

"You see I am surprised, Miss Acheson; in truth, it never occurred to me that 'Merry Mary' reflected so deeply, or lectured so wisely; what think you of inditing another book of homilies, now that the good old-fashioned volume bearing that title has fallen into disuse?"

But merry Mary answered not, for at that moment O'Neil appeared at the door, saying it was time to set out on their excursion; and as his friend had contrived that he should ride by the side of Mary on horseback, he had given his jealousy to the winds, and a merrier pair than himself and his fair companion never enjoyed the fresh breeze, and the bright heaven of a summer's morning.

CHAPTER III.

As Arthur Conyngham sat by the side of his betrothed, and looked upon the mild, the almost angelic countenance, and saw the drooping of the eyelid, and the soft blushing of the cheek, when he whispered of his love; and as he thrilled to hear the low, tremulous tones which responded to his words of passion, he thought such a prize worth any sacrifice. His life-stream had hitherto been like those dark, and turbid, and storm-vexed waters which reflect no heaven-hue amid their gloom. One star had at length arisen—and he had worshipped—it must ever shine, shine for him alone; not one ray must fall upon another.

Their road lay for some distance through a fine avenue, skirted by trees whose foliage exhibited every shade of nature's beautiful green; and between which they caught glimpses of gardens, and orchards, and dwellings, and pasture-fields, and hills whose sloping sides were studded with the dwarf fir, and whose summits were hidden by a lofty canopy of waving branches. A sudden turn in the road brought them upon the banks of the noble Hudson, which

at this spot was covered nearly to the water's edge with a luxuriant growth of vegetation.

The whole party alighted, uttering rapturous exclamations at the beauty of the scene, and Mary bounded away to gather some blue flowers, which were hanging from the cleft of a rock. She found the spot more precipitous than she had supposed, and holding by the young trees and dwarf shrubbery within her reach, she crept downward until the prize was gained. To return was a matter of more difficulty; looking down the steep she saw the rocks, and the water beneath her, and her head grew dizzy—one false step and she was lost. She caught at a large wild vine, but it was decayed, and she found it giving way within her grasp—another moment, and succor would be of no avail—palsied with fear, she could not utter a cry—a cold tremor shot through her veins—her sight grew dim—her fate seemed inevitable—at that instant she felt a hand on her arm, and heard a voice whispering, "Miss Acheson, cling to me." It was O'Neil; he stood on a small projection of loose earth, with his right hand grasping the gnarled root of an old oak, which the storms of centuries had laid bare, and with his left supporting Mary.

"Another step, my dear Miss Acheson, and there is no danger—there—lean on me—thank God, you are safe!" he exclaimed, as Mary, pale and trembling, clung to her preserver, "and would to Heaven," he added in a lower tone, "that I could always be near to shield, and to save you from danger."

Their eyes met, and Mary felt that those few words were full of meaning. She answered not his exclamation—she echoed not his wish—why then did Henry indulge the hope that the being dearest on the earth was not

wholly indifferent to him? It has been said that Love is blind, and this is true in part, for love is often blind to the faults or the follies of the object beloved, but there is no dimness of vision when a look, a touch, an indefinite and impalpable something reveals to us that a chord in another's heart is beating in unison with our own.

"Mr. O'Neil, let us return to our party, we have already been too long absent from them."

"May I hope that I have not offended you, Miss Acheson, that you will not be angry with me?"

"How could I be angry with one to whom I owe my life?"

As Mary said this in evident confusion, O'Neil took her hand, raised it to his lips, and breathed a fervent "God bless you!" The next moment Edward Ogilby was at their side; one glance at the happy countenance of his friend, and the blushing face of his cousin, made him fear that he was an unwelcome intruder, but he was soon re-assured, by Mary placing her arm within his and relating her perilous adventure.

"You have at last met a knight *sans peur*, sweet coz, and my word for it you will find him *sans reproche*," said Edward aloud, and then added in a tone meant but for Mary's ear, "Never glowed a nobler heart in any of God's creatures than that throbbing in the breast of O'Neil." His cousin's face and neck were crimsoned; her hand which rested on his arm trembled slightly; these were mute signs, but Edward knew that a "change had come o'er the spirit of her dream."

Leaving the seniors of the party seated in the shade, watching the lazy-looking craft plying their way on the river, and chatting of old times, and other days, Conyng-

ham and Blanche had strolled in a direction opposite to that taken by Mary, and stood looking at a man who was seated on a pile of logs fishing. His dress attracted their attention, for, although it was July, he wore a gray frieze coat, heavy corduroy breeches, and blue woollen stockings; on his head was a white hat, with a low round crown, and a broad brim drawn down so as to conceal his face. He repeatedly jerked the line in an angry manner, and repeated something between a growl and an oath at his want of success.

"You seem to be rather unlucky to-day, my good fellow," said Conyngham, "have you caught nothing this morning?"

"Caught nothin' is it? no, bad cess to the bit of a fish there is in this river, at all, at all." These words were said without raising his head, or turning toward the person who accosted him.

"How long have you been baiting your hook so unsuccessfully?"

"Iver since six o'clock this mornin', and barrin an eel or two that I wouldn't be bothered keepin', and threw back in the water, I've caught nothin', good or bad."

"Have you been long in this country?"

"About two months, and the curse o' Cromwell on him that was the manes of my comin' here."

Conyngham started, his acute ear had caught a sound not unfamiliar to him, and he turned to hasten away, but his foot sinking in a hollow which had been concealed by long grass, he was thrown forward, and a scream from Blanche brought the stranger to their side. On seeing the lady he raised his hat, and displayed a face of most sullen and forbidding expression. Long carroty locks hung

heavily over a low forehead until they nearly reached a pair of shaggy brows, of somewhat lighter hue, which met over small red eyes, that rolled about with a look of strange wildness; the lips were thick and protruding, and exposed a set of short uneven teeth, which seemed to have been long familiar with the pipe that was thrust into the breast of his coat. Blanche saw all this in far less time than we have consumed in the description, and she involuntarily shuddered. The man stooped down, raised Conyngham, who, from the position in which he had fallen, was unable to extricate himself, and then each looked into the face of the other; there seemed to be the fascination of the serpent in that look, for neither spoke, neither moved; Conyngham's face was deadly pale, that of the man with whom he stood confronted was flushed and livid by turns, and his eye-balls seemed to dilate and glare with fiendish exultation.

"I swore I'd track you out, but I didn't think to find you so soon; I swore it by the heaven above me and the hell beneath me, when I stood at Phil's grave."

"Hold, man—what mean you by speaking thus in the presence of this lady? Blanche, dearest, let me lead you to yon quiet spot, while I speak a moment to this strange fellow." Seating her at a little distance, he whispered, "the fellow was once a servant of mine, he was confined in a mad-house when I left England, and I cannot think how he has effected his escape."

"Oh, go not near him, Arthur, or at least let me stand beside you."

"Fear not, persons like him are more easily subdued by gentleness than violence; fear not, I will be with you in a moment."

When Conyngham returned, the man had assumed a dogged, sullen manner, and when angrily interrogated with "What in the name of all that's infernal brought you here?" returned no answer.

"Do you dare stand there and brave me? answer me, or by heaven I will throw your loathsome carcase into yon river, to fatten the reptiles you flung back into their native element."

The man looked up from under his shaggy brows, and with a low chuckle and a malicious grin, said—

"Sure you wouldn't be afther doin' that same, to frighten the purty lady fornent you, masther."

These words were uttered in a quiet manner, but with the ironical tone of one who knows his adversary is in his power, and that the time has come when the trodden worm may turn and sting the foot that crushed it. The allusion to Blanche restored Conyngham to himself, and, perceiving that no advantage was to be gained by threats, he assumed a lower and more conciliating tone.

"Mick, my good fellow, why are you so obstinate? You know that if you stand in need of any assistance I am able and willing to give it to you, and it was a natural question for me to ask what brought you here?"

"Mr. Ormond, there need be no desate betwixt us; *you know* I'd as soon believe the father of lies himself, as believe you; you know there can be nothin' but black hatred betwixt us, but if you give me somethin' to keep me from dyin' of hunger, may be I'll say nothin' to harm you;" in an under tone he added, "not now, but my time will come yet, you black-hearted scoundrel."

"Here, Mick, here is money," said Conyngham, thrusting gold into his hand as he saw Ogilby and the others

approaching; meet me here this evening at sundown," and with a motion of the hand he waved him from his presence.

"Where did you meet that poor fellow, Mr. Conyngham?" said O'Neil; "by his dress I knew him to be a countryman of mine, and as he turned his head I thought his face like Mick Cassidy's, a man that had once been a servant of my father's, and left our house to live with his old mother at Navan."

Conyngham's face changed color, as he cast a searching glance at O'Neil's countenance, but he probably saw nothing there to alarm him, for he instantly replied—

"I should judge by his brogue that he was from the land which produces 'the finest pisantry in the world,' but I know nothing more about him. The fellow was asking for charity, that he might have something to 'buy a bit and a sup for Biddy and six childer she had at home wid her.'"

"Oh then," said O'Neil, good-humoredly laughing, "it cannot be Mick Cassidy, for he had neither wife nor child when I left home, about three months ago."

When Conyngham rejoined Blanche, he whispered, "Say nothing about the man being mad, love, he is more rational than I supposed him to be, and I concealed his malady, lest he should be put in confinement, which I know would break the poor fellow's heart."

"You are ever careful of the feelings of others, Arthur, but you must not again ramble here alone; if you were to encounter that horrid-looking man in one of his frenzied moments, I shudder to think what might be the result."

"My own sweet Blanche, fear not; before I knew you I was reckless of life, and plunged into the midst of dan-

ger, but now that a new existence has dawned upon me, that I have you to care for—to love me—you for whom I would peril my salvation—I shrink like a coward from every appearance of harm. Oh Blanche, mine own Blanche! promise me that you will ever love me thus tenderly—thus confidingly—promise me, dearest, as you now love me, promise that you will continue to love me under every change of circumstance."

"Why should you require such a promise, Arthur, when you know—" and the timid girl paused—

"When I know that you do—that you ever will cling to me unalterably—unchangeably—is it not thus, my sweet love?"

He felt the soft pressure of the delicate hand; he knew by the slight quivering of the frame, and the faltering of the voice, that the heart-pulse was quickened by the thrill of love. It was enough—he would brave his fate—he would defy the demons of revenge to wrest the treasure from his grasp—he would wed Blanche Acheson in spite of all the love of her cousin—in defiance of all the spectres of the past, which at times arose to mock and torture him.

CHAPTER IV.

The party rode home by a longer and more circuitous route, through groves of maple, and broad woods, bordered by the wild laurel and the sumach with its thick clusters of red berries. They passed through a beautiful little village, with the spire of its neat white church pointing

up to the blue sky, beyond which are mansions for the weary in this world's warfare, who lay them down trusting in the merits and the promises of Him who is the resurrection and the life. What different feelings held sway in the breasts of many of the group as they alighted on their arrival at the house! Conyngham was moody and silent; over Blanche there hung a vague presentiment of evil, which she endeavored to shake off, but the cloud on Arthur's brow, and his absence of manner, would not allow her to remain at ease, and her conduct took the color from his own. In the breast of Edward Ogilby a strange suspicion had arisen concerning the betrothed of his cousin. He had observed Conyngham's manner while conversing with Mick, before O'Neil interrupted their discourse; he had noticed his alarm at Harry's recognition of his countryman, and, loving Blanche as he did with the holiest and purest affection, he resolved, since she could not be his own, to watch over her destiny.

O love! well might the ancients suppose the same passion could not produce such opposite effects, therefore did they fable two deities who presided over the hearts of men. One, thou ennoblest beyond the common standard of humanity, thou makest him kind, gentle, self-sacrificing—the desire for the happiness of the beloved object is the ruling motive of every action, yea, even when called upon to contemplate the bliss, which would have made his heaven, enjoyed to the full by another.

With another, thou art the deadly Upas, overshadowing the whole life. Jealousy poisons the fountain of truth, and those streams which should have been to the soul refreshing as rivers in the desert, become bitter as the waters of Marah, and he would rather lay the soft, smooth cheek,

and the ripe, red lip in the charnel-house with the worm, than rest them for a moment in the arms of a rival.

Not of this latter character was the love of Ogilby, nor of O'Neil, whose face was radiant with smiles, nor of Mary, as she bounded up the steps secretly exclaiming, "he loves me! *he* loves me!" and when seated within her apartment, pressing the blue flowers to her lips, those flowers to gain which, but for Henry, would have cost her life, and which were now starred with the tears gushing from a young heart full of the soft delirium of its first love. Let not the reader suppose that Mary Acheson was too lightly won. No plain avowal of passion had passed the lips of O'Neil, no word had fallen from hers to raise a blush upon the cheek of virgin modesty, and yet she knew that he loved her, and, trembling as the veil was raised from her spirit's hidden workings, she felt that henceforth his love was to be her world of happiness.

As the last glow of sunlight was fading from the heavens, and its reflection was dying on the waters, and as the first star of eve was glittering in its lone beauty, a figure might be seen crossing the main road, and leaping a low stone wall. It glided stealthily along a narrow lane, each side of which was shaded by trees, through whose branches, swayed by a light breeze, fell the soft beams of the crescent moon, dancing from leaf to leaf, and sporting on the green sward, like happy childhood playing with its shadow. On reaching a wicket-gate, which opened on an enclosure where stood a small white cottage, the latch was raised without noise, and the figure disappeared behind a clump of wild shrubbery. It emerged again at some distance from the house, and pausing, as if to ascertain whether it had escaped observation, quickened its pace and was again

lost in a steep and dangerous path which wound round a rocky declivity; again it was seen swinging lightly from a young sapling, whose topmost boughs concealed the entrance to the secret road, and a few paces brought it to the spot where Mick Cassidy had sat that morning fishing.

"He is not here—does he mean to balk me?" said Conyngham, whose stealthy progress we have just followed. "The fellow is a stranger," he continued, muttering in a lower tone, "and accidents will happen—what if he should miss his foothold?—dead men tell no tales—their lips are voiceless—mute—mute forever—ha! *mute forever.*"

A splash in the water beside him—a noise as of a strong man struggling with the waves, and the voice of Mick crying for help, roused him; for a moment his better nature gained the mastery—the promptings of humanity urged him forward—the next instant he shrunk back, and held his breath lest the drowning man should discover him.

"One more hould of these slippery logs, and I'm saved any how, O, meala murther, but it's hard to find one's self going down in a strange place like this, and all for that cursed—" Mick was not suffered to finish his sentence; a hand, with the strong and iron grasp of a giant, clenched his arm, and unloosed his fingers from the log to which they were clinging.

"For the sake of your sowl, don't push me down, I'm here to meet a gintleman who is to give me money, and you shall have it all if—" just then a current of wind blew off the hat of his unknown adversary, and a straggling moonbeam revealed to Mick the features of Conyngham.

"Is it you, you murderin' villian! sure, I might have known that neither grace nor good luck could follow any

one that touched your cursed goold; let me up, and I'll swear niver to harm a hair of your head, Mr. Ormond."

Mick had again succeeded in grasping the logs, when the same powerful arm dashed him down, though not until with one hand he had caught the arm of Conyngham.

"Do you dare to grapple with me? This, then, for your presumption"—and a blow on the temple sent the unhappy man, who was weak from his recent exertions, back into the water.

"Oh—mercy—Mr. Ormond—help—mercy—" another struggle—a smothered cry—and the waves closed over the wretched being who had so lately pleaded for his life.

Conyngham shuddered—the memory of other days, and other crimes, swept over his soul, but this was the first time that his own hand had sent a fellow being into eternity, and the flickering moonlight thronged the place with shapes, wild, deformed, and unearthly, and the heaving waters repeated, with a thousand echoes, the moans of the murdered man.

Snatching up his hat, and looking once more into the river, as if to assure himself that all was over, he muttered, "dead men tell no tales"—and threading again his concealed route, soon emerged into the highway, and entering a tavern where his servant sat dozing in the corner of the bar-room, ordered him to get ready the carriage immediately. The order was quickly obeyed, and in less than two hours the murderer was seated alone in an elegant and luxuriously furnished apartment, at one of the most fashionable hotels in the very heart of the gay metropolis. What a world is this! and what a life is this! where opposite extremes so often meet, and where the outward seeming is such an unfaithful transcript of the hidden man of the heart.

CHAPTER V.

"I HAD a strange dream last night, Mary. Methought I was standing with Arthur, in the upper part of an old, dilapidated building, in a strange, wild country, when we were startled by the most frightful and piercing screams, long, clear, loud and fiend-like, curdling the heart-blood with their terror. On looking up, we saw an immense bird, black as midnight, circling in the air. It wheeled to and fro, flapping its heavy wings, when, suddenly, with one downward swoop it caught a bright-plumaged warbler, which was soaring upward, and uttering again that fearful cry, which now seemed like a demon-shout of victory, bore its bleeding prey to a cleft in a massy pile of rocks, which towered high in majestic grandeur before us. Sick and faint, I turned away, cowering in dread as if the spirit of evil were ruling in the air; when I raised my head Arthur was gone. The bird was again circling and shrieking; instinctively I felt that the flash of its dark eye was directed to where I stood, and I turned to escape. As I fled through a long gloomy gallery I heard the rush of its wings, and gave myself up for lost; in an instant more it was wheeling over my head, and with the same yell with which it had caught the poor bird, darted toward me; for a moment I seemed turned to stone, but as it raised its talons, as if about to dart them in my side, I stretched my hand, and, grasping it by the neck, held it writhing like a worm in its agony. Again and again it strove to turn and bury its beak in my arm, but my strength appeared super-

human, and I succeeded in baffling its efforts, until thinking life extinct I threw it from me. Once more it rose—circled and shrieked—once more I grasped it—once more its beak was turned toward my arm, but I bore a charmed life, it had no power to hurt me, and at length I flung it down dead, with its large heavy wings drooping by its side, its sable plumage ruffled and torn, and its tongue, forked like that of a serpent, protruding from its enormous beak. I flung it from me, and wondered that Arthur was not near to aid me in the struggle with mine enemy. Was it not a strange dream, Mary?"

"It was, dear Blanche, but you have grown fanciful of late, and some wild Eastern tale that you have been reading has held sway over your imagination during the hours of sleep. You were not always wont to be terrified by those freaks of fancy; why now give them even a passing thought?"

"I have been reading no Eastern tales, Mary; nothing in the slightest manner connected with that horrid dream; but there is a mountain load of sadness weighing on my heart. The least noise startles me—the wind, as it bears onward the faded leaves on its unseen wings, wails on my ear with the melancholy plaintiveness of a funeral dirge—the very gleams of sunshine, which were once to me the types of all things beautiful and joyous, now wear a sad and mocking splendor. I wish Arthur was here; when he is by my side I feel safe from all harm; why did he leave me when the dark raven shrieked over me? Arthur! Arthur! come to me, mine own, come to me once again." And Blanche buried her face in her hands and wept.

"My sister—my own sister—" but the words of consolation which Mary attempted to utter faltered and died

away as she looked upon Blanche, drooping like the lily-bell when the spirit of the storm trails his dark wing over earth's loveliest and sweetest. Sitting down beside her sister, and locking her arms around her, and bowing her head until her cheek touched that of Blanche, she suffered their tears to flow long and silently together.

It was the middle of autumn, and the trees had pranked themselves right gorgeously. Here stood one, a veteran of the forest, dyed in crimson, as if a warrior's heart-blood had been poured into the veining of every leaf—there another, arrayed as if the divining-rod had suddenly rooted itself in a hoard of concealed treasure, and sprung up branched and decked with the coveted gold—some, brilliant as if the regal purple of an Eastern monarch had been shred to clothe them with magnificence, and others sombre as if hooded and cowled in the dark garb of a Carmelite. But all were beautiful, as the slanting rays of the parting sunlight fell among their slightly quivering branches, and the flame-colored glory, blended with deep amethyst, lay in long lines in the western heaven, while here and there a light pillar of misty brightness rose high, upholding the leaden pall which was gradually darkening the horizon.

A sunset! An autumn sunset! An autumn sunset in the deep woods! Alone in the temple of Nature—roofed by the vaulted arch of the eternal heavens—the sere leaves strewing the long aisles—the light struggling in broken masses through the leaf-woven oratory—its music, now low and sweet as the far-off sound of an angel's harp-chord, now full and loud as the roar of many waters, woke by the master-power of that mighty wind which uprooteth the forest in its fury, and sighs wooingly over the blossoms of the blue hare-bell in its mountain home. Is there not in

the soul of man a secret sympathy with Nature, that his heart-strings are ever played upon by her mysterious influence? She looks upon him with a bright and laughing face, and he gives her back smiles which are but the reflection of her own. She pours out the pleasant sunshine, gladdening and revivifying every green hamlet and quiet dell, and showering sparkles on every ripple of the silver wave, and she pours it too upon the dark lanes and crowded alleys of the thronged city, lighting up many a cheek long blanched by sorrow, and sickness, and want, and making the sufferer to feel that the sunshine is indeed a blessed thing. It is not until the spirit has been worn and crushed, that Nature's joyous greetings seem a mockery, and it was painful to see the young and fair Blanche Acheson, on this glorious evening, bowed in bitterness of spirit to the very earth.

Soon after the night which saw Mick Cassidy so vainly pleading for his life, Conyngham had taken a hurried farewell of Woodvale. Pleading a long-deferred engagement to spend a short time with a friend in a distant part of the state, with a thousand burning words to Blanche, and exacting from her again and again a vow of unalterable fidelity, he tore himself from her side. He had written but once, and then he spoke of the necessity of a prolonged absence, and of his soul's wish to be united to her who was dearer to him than life.

Edward Ogilby and his friend were also away. They had been passing the summer months in visiting many of those beautiful places which so justly excite the admiration of travellers from the Old World, and a letter, received that day by Mr. Acheson, put the family in momentary expectation of their arrival

While the sisters were still sitting pondering over the past, and vainly endeavoring to lift the veil from the future, the tramp of a horse was heard, nearer and nearer—"It is coming up the lane, Mary, let us retire." Nearer and nearer—across the avenue—through the gateway—it is behind them—the rider springs from the saddle, and in another moment Blanche is folded in the arms of him for whose absence the warm tears so lately shed are yet glistening on her cheek.

"Blanche! mine own! mine own! no earthly power shall ever again part us."

"You look ill, Arthur—you are pale, and your eyes have a dark shadow, as of grief and watching, around them—why is this?"

"All will be well now, dearest—there has been watching in the long hours that kept me from you—and there has been grief that we were parted from each other, but 't is over now, I am once more by thy side; I am the dove returning to the ark, not the raven flying away from its resting-place."

A shudder passed over Blanche; she thought of her dream, and clung closer to the side of Conyngham. Mary had left them after the first greetings with Arthur, and, before they entered the house, he had drawn from Blanche the promise that another month should make her all his own.

"We have been expecting my nephew and his friend this week past," said Mr. Acheson, a few evening after Arthur's return. "They promised to pass Hallowe'en with us, that we might talk over some of the tricks still practised by light-hearted youngsters in our father-land. I shall be sadly disappointed if they are not here, for I like to preserve the memory of old customs, when mirth and hospi-

tality make even the poor and the care-worn to forget their want and wretchedness for the time. There is holy, time-honored Christmas—what an inexhaustible fund of kindliness and good-feeling is stirred up by the church-chimes on its hallowed morning. How the heart of every member of a family glows with gratitude to God, and with love to each other, as they return from praising him in temples dedicated to his service, whose arches have resounded with anthems hailing the nativity of our Lord. What warm thanks ascend from the well-filled board to Him who hath laden the barns with plenty, and made the presses to burst out with new wine, and how the charity which burns within the breast makes us feel that it is more blessed to give than to receive, as we look on the glad faces of the partakers of our bounty. Here, there is New-Year, with its interchange of kindly greetings, and Christmas, too, with its gift-giver riding over the tops of houses, and down the chimneys, to fill the stockings of the little ones. Do you remember, Mary, the Christmas eve you lay watching for Santa-Claus, and saw your mother and me stealing in and depositing your presents? I believe you never looked out for St. Nicholas after that."

"Mr. Ogilby," said a servant, opening the door of the apartment.

"Ned, my dear boy, we were just talking of you. Where is O'Neil?"

"He will be here in a moment, dear uncle, we only arrived in town this afternoon. Harry met with an old friend of his at the hotel; on introducing me to the stranger, I found that his father and you had been very intimate, and, relying on your Irish hospitality, I invited him to spend Hallowe'en at your house."

Ogilby glanced round while he was speaking; Mary was already at his side, with his hand pressed in hers; she led him toward Blanche, there was a slight, a very slight tremor of the voice as he returned her gentle salutation, for an instant there was a reeling of the brain, a dimness of sight, it was but an instant; yet Conyngham's jealous eye had detected those signs of a passion wrestling with and seeking to hide its agony; and, appearing not to notice the proffered hand of Ogilby, he bowed in cold and stately silence. In a few minutes they were joined by O'Neil and his friend.

"Mr. Fortescue," said Harry, addressing Mr. Acheson. "When Edward learned that Major Fortescue and yourself had been friends, he was sure that his son would meet with a welcome reception."

"Bless me! can it be possible? Guy Fortescue! The major had but one child, a boy six years of age, when I saw him last—and now that I look at you, it seems as if your father stood before me, looking as he did twenty years ago; bless me! but I'm glad to see you. My dear," addressing Mrs. Acheson, "you remember when the 45th lay in Enniskillen, and Major Fortescue and his lady were with us almost daily. The major and I had been friends from boyhood; we entered Trinity together, graduated at the same time, and, from the time he entered the army until his death, were regular correspondents."

"I beg you will consider our house your home for a month at least, Mr. Fortescue, and I am sure my daughters will second the wish, whom, by the by, Mr. Acheson has not yet presented to you."

Mary greeted him warmly, her father's friend, and Harry's friend, her young heart sprung up to meet him as

a brother, and Blanche, in a sweet tone of gentle kindness, welcomed him to their home.

On the entrance of O'Neil, Conyngham had suddenly left his place by the side of Blanche, and seated himself at a greater distance from the group. As he rose to meet Fortescue, who, with Mr. Acheson, was approaching him, his whole face appeared suffused with a livid and unnatural hue, and Fortescue, with a smothered exclamation, and an involuntary start, let fall the hand which had been stretched toward him. Mr. Acheson was surprised, but with that ready tact which is ever exerted to spare the feelings of others, forbore to notice the circumstance.

As the evening wore away, Conyngham recovered his self-possession. The host and hostess, with Edward Ogilby, were wholly absorbed in conversation with Fortescue, and O'Neil challenged Mary to a game of chess. She made many a wrong move, but then she was a novice, and Harry, instead of watching his chess-men soberly and quietly, as he should have done, was gazing in her face, and "maliciously," as she said, "laughing at her awkwardness."

"To-morrow night," said Mr. Acheson, as the party were separating, "to-morrow night is Hallowe'en, and ours shall be a merry meeting."

CHAPTER VI.

"Mr. Ogilby," said Fortescue, as they stood in the hall, "will you allow me a few moments conversation with you before retiring?"

Edward had his misgivings, and without speaking put his

arm in that of his companion and left the house. The night was clear and cold, there was no moon; but the light of the ever-burning stars, solemn and holy as shone the eyes of the glorified Beatrice on the entranced Florentine, was shining down upon the earth.

"I make no apology, Mr. Ogilby, for entering at once upon a painful and delicate subject. My friend O'Neil informed me that Miss Acheson was about to become the bride of a Mr. Conyngham, a wealthy and accomplished Englishman. You saw our meeting, and you will not wonder at its effect when I tell you that in the betrothed of your cousin, I recognized Francis Ormond, one of our own countrymen, a fugitive from justice, the perpetrator of one of the blackest crimes of ingratitude that ever branded its shame on the brow of man. Christopher, or as he was familiarly called, 'Kit' Ormond, was my mother's cousin; disappointed early in life, he never married, and seldom left his estate at Navan, except for an occasional visit to Dublin, where most of his friends resided. Passing one day through the Phenix Park, he saw a boy poorly clad, devouring a crust with a half famished aspect, and weeping bitterly. Mr. Ormond, ever alive to generous impulses, moved by the child's forlorn appearance, stopped and accosted him. His tale was a pitiful one. He had no home, no parents, his mother had been dead a year, and his father had, within the last two weeks, been buried from a wretched hovel, where he had lain ill for months. Since he followed his father to the grave, he had supported himself by begging through the day, and creeping at night into a cellar with an old woman, herself a beggar, who had last evening told him he must come there no longer unless he could pay for his lodging.

"Mr. Ormond took the boy to his own home, had him comfortably, even handsomely clad, and, as the housekeeper remarked, 'he was made to look like the son of a gentleman.' He was really fine looking, and Frank Stevens was soon the pet and constant companion of his benefactor. Soon after my dear mother's death, my father was ordered abroad with his regiment, and I was sent to the house of Mr. Ormond.

"One day, while Frank and I were playing, a beggar woman came up to us and asked for charity. She started on seeing my companion, and, staring at him with astonishment, asked if he were not little Frank Stevens, who had lodged with her after his father died. He endeavored to shake her off, but the woman angry on seeing he did not wish to recognize her, began to use loud language, accompanied by violent gesticulation. Mr. Ormond coming forward, she immediately changed her manner, and courtesying low, in a whining tone begged for some relief.

"'Why were you speaking so rudely to these boys? I have half a mind not to give you a farthing.'

"'It was only to little Frank, and I was speaking quietly, yer honor; sure, if I might be so bould, I'd jist ax ye to bid him show me the picthur of the purty lady he us'd to wear about his neck. Och but she was an angel to look at—let me see it now, do, Frank, dear.

"'Woman, here is some mistake, you do not know that boy; he has no such picture as you speak of—have you, Francis?'

"The sullen boy returned no answer, and Mr. Ormond, putting some money into the hand of the woman, without waiting to hear more than 'long life to yer honor,' led us both to the house. On entering, he took Frank with him

into his library, and they remained for a long time together. The result of their conference was, that Frank showed the miniature of his mother, which he had contrived to keep concealed about his person, and that the faultless likeness proved to be that of Mr. Ormond's early love. Here was a new tie, which drew him closer to the boy, and from that day adopted him as his own, and changed his name from Stephens to that of Ormond.

"I must acknowledge that Frank and I, though playmates, were never friends. He was fierce, vindictive and sullen to every one but his benefactor; toward him he behaved in such a fawning manner, seeming to have no will but his, that the crafty parasite succeeded in blinding his fond and partial friend to all the defects in his character. Years passed; Frank and I went to college, he to Cambridge, I to Trinity, and when we saw each other again he had done that which transformed the man into the fiend.

"While in England, he indulged in every species of riot and debauchery, and the taverns were more familiar with his bacchanalian songs, than were the halls of Alma Mater with his recitations of the classics. He was deeply in debt, and under several false pretences, succeeded in obtaining large sums of money from Mr. Ormond. In one of his drunken brawls he taunted a fellow-collegian beyond endurance; a challenge was the consequence; young Sidney was wounded, though not mortally, and Frank was expelled.

"The baliffs were on his track, ready to arrest him for debt, but, with the assistance of his chum, he effected his escape and took the packet at Holyhead for Dublin. A letter containing a full account of his proceedings was still lying open on the library table at Navan, when he entered the house of his only friend.

"Mr. Ormond received him coldly, and in the excitement of the moment reproached him with his want of gratitude for the kindness shown him. The young man replied bitterly, and rudely, and Mr. Ormond, who, although the kindest-hearted man living, was unhappily of too hasty a temper, struck a blow which was never forgiven. One morning he was found strangled in his bed. Nothing could be elicited at the inquest to throw light on the dark proceeding; his door was fastened on the inside, and the murderer's object evidently had not been plunder, for a large amount of money lay untouched in the drawer of a secretaire in his bed-room. Phil Cassidy, one of the servants, deposed, that in the gray-dawn he had seen a short man, in the dress of a Wicklow peasant, climbing over the garden-wall into the deer-park; he took him for a poacher, and did not speak, lest he should turn and fire on him; this was the only incident which appeared to have any connection with the mysterious affair.

"Frank was from home; he had been absent three or four days, and was immediately sent for; his well-counterfeited grief lulled the suspicions of all but Phil, who had overheard the angry altercation between him and the deceased; and the servant more than once hinted that he had a guess of somebody who was concerned in the murder of his master. Frank seemed to think instinctively that Phil was watching his movements, and for some frivolous cause dismissed him from his service. A few days after he was found shot, not a hundred yards from the cabin occupied by his mother and only brother Mick. I was there the morning the body was buried, and heard Mick Cassidy swearing, upon his brother's grave, to track the murderer.

"At the summer fair a fight arose between two opposite

factions. In the midst of the *melée* Mick felled a man to the earth, another blow would have sent him into eternity. Striving to stay the arm of Mick, as it was about descending, he muttered—'Spare me, Mick Cassidy, I've that to tell you'd give your right hand to hear.'

"'Don't mind him, Mick, sure you'll not let it be said that iver an O'Hara bate a Cassidy?' said a servant of Ormond's, who was standing beside them.

"'Tim Rogan, I'm nearly dyin'—touch me if you dare'—seeing the stick of Tim flourishing in his hand—'I tell you, I'm nearly dyin' and I've no more dread of you nor your masther—hould me up, Mick—I think I can get as far as the magistrate's, and there I'll tell you who shot Phil.'

"O'Hara was supported to the house of the nearest justice of the peace, where he made his deposition, on oath, the substance of which was as follows:

"On the day preceding Mr. Ormond's murder, he had met Tim Rogan at a poteen house, where, after drinking a couple of naggins of whiskey, Tim told him he knew of a job which, if nately done, would put a hundred pounds into a man's pocket. O'Hara swore secrecy, and then his companion disclosed a plot for taking the life of Mr. Ormond. The garden-wall was to be scaled, and a ladder used for climbing fruit trees was to be placed under one of Mr. Ormond's chamber windows, which was always left partly open for a circulation of air, in the summer season; his life was to be taken without any external marks of violence being left on his person, and strangling was agreed upon. Tim said he could not earn the money, as he must be away that night to Mr. Frank, who had planned it all, and as he knew O'Hara had a stout heart, and withal an old grudge at the man, he thought it better to tell him than any other.

"The deed was done, and he received from Rogan the promised reward. The only man of whom he was afraid was Phil Cassidy; he knew Phil had seen him, and he was still in dread of being recognized, when one morning he heard Cassidy had been found shot, and Rogan confessed to him that he had done it, for that his master said neither of them were safe while Phil was living.

"Here was a startling disclosure, sworn to by a man who had not many hours to live, and after some delay a warrant was issued for the arrest of Mr. Francis Ormond, and his servant Timothy Rogan. The officers found only Tim at the house, who, when taken into custody, protested his innocence, and persisted in his protestations till confronted with the dying O'Hara, when his courage failed, and he confessed the whole diabolical transaction. He said he had given his master an account of what passed at the fair, but denied all knowledge of his movements.

"In the meantime, Frank had posted to Dublin; on the next morning drawn a large sum which had been deposited in the Bank of Ireland, and then disguising himself, awaited the event. The papers were filled with details of the atrocious deed, and a large reward was offered to any one who would deliver the fugitive up to justice. The search was useless; once, and but once, was Frank recognized, and that was by myself. As I descended the side of a vessel, on board of which I had just taken leave of a friend, I saw a man standing alone, leaning against a mast, watching the boat which was to convey me to the shore; there was something about him, although he evidently wore a disguise, which made me look again, when he turned abruptly from the spot—that man was Frank Ormond, and the vessel was bound for America.

"O'Hara died of his wounds, Rogan was hung for the murder of Phil Cassidy, Mick embarked for this country, and when I left home the whole affair was gradually fading from the minds of the people. I have endeavored to be as brief as possible in my narration of these unhappy events, and I leave it with you to break the matter to your uncle's family. Good night, and God bless you."

Ogilby retired to his room, but not to rest. All night long he paced the floor; his anxiety was for Blanche, he knew she was devotedly attached to the wretched man whose soul was so darkened with crime, yet he could not see his pure and stainless cousin's destiny linked with that of a cold-blooded murderer. There was no selfishness mingled with his feelings, there was no thought that the sweet star of his idolatry might yet be his own, he could not build his bower of happiness on the ruin of another's hope. No! Blanche—the worshipped of years—the haunter of his boyhood's, yea, of his manhood's visions—was lost to him forever; and often during that wretched night of mental agony did the thought cross his mind, that it were better to conceal all, and leave her to her dream of bliss.

CHAPTER VII.

Glad to behold the first faint glimmer of the coming day, Edward wandered from the house, still uncertain as to what course he should pursue. He crossed the garden, passed through a wicket into an adjoining wood, and walk-

ed on abstractedly until his attention was arrested by the sound of voices behind a stone wall which separated his uncle's domain from the public avenue.

"I knew of old that you were an early riser, Mr. Fortescue, and I have watched your coming forth, that I might throw myself upon your mercy, and beg that, in this land, the remembrance of the past may be forgotten. My life is bound up in that of the fair being whom you last evening found seated by my side; it is for her that I plead, not for myself. I could dare and defy you, but Blanche Acheson must not be immolated for deeds of which, after all, there is no positive evidence."

"There was wanting no link in the chain of circumstantial evidence, and the dying deposition of the man bribed by your servant, and the solemn confession of that servant himself, before suffering the penalty of the law for another murder to which you were instrumental, have left no doubt that you are polluted with crimes of the blackest dye. Chance brought me to the house of Mr. Acheson, and to his nephew I last night revealed your secret."

"To Edward Ogilby! Curse him—curse him—through him has all this been done—through him and through his friend you found your way here—and now he thinks to win the prize for which I have so long contended—curse him—and curse you too, Guy Fortescue, your babbling tongue has told its last tale," and he plunged a short dirk into the breast of Fortescue.

"Villain!" shouted a voice, as Guy fell backward, "villain! your life shall pay for this!" and Ogilby leaped the wall—"base-hearted, treacherous villain!" again he shouted, as he stood face to face confronted with Conyngham. Fearful was it to behold these two young men as they

stood, with knitted brows, glaring on each other; Conyngham with the deadly weapon still in his grasp, and Ogilby with his fingers clenched until the blood nearly oozed from his palms.

"Aye, curse you again, Edward Ogilby," said the infuriated man, who had now lost all self-possession, "curse you again," and he made a pass at his adversary. Ogilby warded off the blow, and succeeded in wrenching the weapon from his foe—they grappled—Conyngham's eyes seemed starting from their sockets—his nostrils were dilated—his face was suddenly overspread with a dark purple hue—he staggered—reeled—and fell, with the blood gushing from his mouth. All this had passed with the rapidity of thought, and before any of the inmates of Mr. Acheson's house were yet abroad. Edward hurried from the spot, and found his uncle just coming down the stairs; beckoning to him to remain silent, he left the house and motioned him to follow; then in a rapid manner ran over the events of the morning, and the disclosures of Fortescue the preceding night. Before Mr. Acheson had time for question or reply they were at the fatal place. Fortescue had revived, and was sitting leaning against the wall, but Conyngham still lay insensible, while a man in the garb of a common laborer was bending over him, trying to wipe away the blood with which his face and neck were disfigured.

"Good heaven, what a sight! Mr. Fortescue, you must be conveyed to the house immediately; I trust your wound is a slight one; but for this villain, who has ruined forever the peace of my gentle and innocent child, he must be taken from hence—my home shall never more be polluted by his presence."

"Blanche—mine own—" muttered the wretched man as Mr. Acheson's words restored him to consciousness.

"Speak not of Blanche, Arthur Conyngham, take not her name in your foul lips; merciful has been her escape; I thank my God she is not your wedded wife," said the heart-stricken father, as he turned away to procure assistance.

"Conyngham—Conyngham—" musingly repeated the man, who was still leaning over him, "that was the name of the gentleman Mick Cassidy went to meet by the river side. He had another name, too, Osborne, or Ormond, or something like that—poor Mick, he had sad misgivings the night he left me, and, sure enough, I never saw him again."

Conyngham groaned aloud, and Ogilby, who had interchanged glances with Forteseue, begged the man to desist from speaking.

Mr. Acheson soon returned; he had broken the matter as gently as possible to his wife and Mary, and left to the former the task of telling the tale to Blanche.

The dirk of Conyngham had missed its aim, and the wound of Fortescue, although it bled profusely, was but slight. The wretched Arthur had broken a blood-vessel! he was placed in a carriage, and, accompanied by O'Neil, slowly conveyed to his lodgings in the city.

During the whole of that melancholy day, Blanche but awoke from one swoon to fall into another. Toward evening she appeared to recover, and became quite calm; she even talked of indifferent matters, and once alluded to her father's intention that night to have a merry Hallowe'en. Her parents were deceived by her manner, and thought that strength for the trial had been given their

darling child, but Edward, with the quick and watchful eye of love, detected something sad and strangely fearful under her assumed composure, and with the determination to watch her narrowly, retired for the night. It was long past midnight before the light in her room was extinguished, and not until it was, did her cousin, harassed and dispirited, throw himself upon his couch.

Late the next morning the sad family assembled in the breakfast-room—Blanche was absent.

"Mary, love," said Mrs. Acheson, "go and bring your sister to us. My poor sufferer! may He who tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb be with you in this hour of trial!"

"He will be with her, my dear aunt. Oh, Blanche! my angel-cousin! my peerless Blanche! what a harsh fate is thine!" and Edward Ogilby bent his head and suffered the tears which could no longer be hidden to flow unrestrainedly. Mr. Acheson could not speak, he stood with his arms folded, inwardly mourning over the sorrow which had fallen on his house.

"She is not there! father! mother! she is not there!" exclaimed Mary, pale with terror, rushing into the room. All were horror-struck—it was too true—she was gone! Every place was searched, but in vain. Could it be that Blanche, the pure, the good, could it be that she had rushed unbidden into the presence of her Maker? There were horrible surmisings as the wretched father explored the river's bank, looking in vain for some token of his lost child. It was noon, and all search had proved fruitless. O'Neil had not returned—whether Conyngham were living or not was unknown to them—and in this new cause of grief his existence was almost forgotten.

"She is gone—Heaven only knows where—I thought last night that calmness of manner was unnatural—I then feared for her life, now my sorrow is increased ten-fold, I fear for her reason," said Ogilby, as he threw himself in a seat beside Fortescue.

"I have thought of one place where your cousin might be found, but have forborne to mention it, lest it might prove only a false hope."

"Where? where? for Heaven's sake, tell me! I do not think her dead, and yet I cannot imagine where she has concealed herself."

"Was she not aware that Ormond was yesterday conveyed to the city?"

"She was—but you forget—she left here last night—after midnight—there was no conveyance—in the cold dark night to walk six miles—and yet such gentle natures as hers, when roused, do more, dare more, than others—it is impossible! still it is our last hope. I will instantly to town—do not tell my uncle of this surmise until I have ascertained its certainty."

In a few moments Edward Ogilby was speeding on horseback to the city.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was a cold raw morning, the day had scarcely dawned, when a female wrapped in a large cloak, and wearing a deep straw bonnet, with a thick veil of green gauze, presented herself at the door of an hotel and asked permis-

sion to see Mr. Conyngham. There had been a heavy drizzling rain, the pavement was wet and muddy, and the woman's garments were saturated with moisture. The waiter eyed her keenly; her voice was evidently disguised, but there was that in her manner which kept the man from treating her with rudeness, and he civilly denied her request.

"You cannot see him, ma'am, he has been very ill all night, and the physicians have forbidden any one entering the room but the nurse."

"Very ill all night! even now perhaps dying! for the sake of mercy take me to him!"

"I dare not, the doctor's orders were positive, and I might lose my place by being too obliging; however, as you are cold and wet, you had better wait here till the fire is kindled in the hall, and then I will carry a message up for you;" so saying, the man left her, muttering something about unfortunate creatures running after sick gentlemen.

Blanche was alone—the timid, shrinking Blanche, about whom the arms of love had ever been folded, to shield her from the storm, as close the guardian leaves around the flower of the Celandine. She who started at every noise, and trembled at every shadow, had, in the dark night, without moon or stars to glimmer on her pathway, with the rain beating on her fragile form, traversed unharmed six dreary miles. Surely her mother's prayer had been answered, and He who tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb had walked with her in the darkness. Standing in the hall, she looked anxiously round to see if any one was observing her, and finding herself still alone, she rapidly ascended the stairs. She had heard Conyngham mention the number of his room while giving directions to

a servant, and sure that if once at the door she would gain admittance, hurried through the passage. A woman was stealing softly out of an apartment—Blanche passed her—the door was ajar—it was his—she passed the threshhold—there was a dull, heavy fall on the floor—she had fainted. The noise brought back the nurse, who was astonished at finding the strange female lying senseless in the sick man's room. Untying the strings of the bonnet, and putting aside the veil which was still folded over the face, the good woman gave utterance to her surprise.

"Goodness me! what a beautiful creature! Why she looks like a wax-doll, only she han't got no color in her cheeks—don't be frightened, sir, it's only a young woman what's made a mistake, and got into the wrong chamber—where's my Sal Wolatil?—she'll come to in a minute, I reckon—massy me! how cold her hands keep—if I only had some aromatic winegar."

The back of the nurse was turned to the bed on which Conyngham was lying; rising noiselessly, he wrapped his dressing-gown about him, and moved toward her; the light from a shaded lamp fell on the face of the person whose temples she was chafing; still, cold, and fair as the statue of Parian marble which realizes the sculptor's dream of ideal beauty, lay the unhappy girl.

"Merciful Heaven! could not this have been spared me? Oh, Blanche! Blanche! she hears me not—she is dead!"

"Goodness me, sir! you shouldn't a got up; what if the doctor should come in now—why, I didn't think you was strong enough hardly to raise your little finger, let alone to come out here—do let me help you back, or set down in the easy cheer." Her words were unheeded.

"Blanche—Blanche," again groaned Conyngham, as he threw himself on the floor by her side. Strange and mighty is the power of a voice beloved! Through the thickly-gathering clouds, and the dim and awful unconsciousness of approaching dissolution, it can rouse the dull and torpid sense, and stay the fleeting spirit on the confines of the tomb. The sufferer slowly raised the veined lids, gazed upon Arthur long and earnestly, and again relapsed into insensibility.

"Goodness me! I must call the housekeeper, I can't stay here all alone and she a dyin'."

"Call no one, woman—Blanche—my betrothed—she yet lives!"

"I have had another horrid dream!—they told me, Arthur, that you—but I did not believe them—I knew it was not so—"

"Leave us, nurse, let no one enter the room, I will ring when I wish your return."

"La massy, you 'm too weak, sir, and the young lady an't half got over her faintin' spell."

"Leave us—come not until you hear the bell."

The nurse very unwillingly left the room. Being blessed with a double portion of the curiosity attributed to her sex, and that curiosity being now raised to the highest pitch by what she had seen and heard, she endeavored to gratify it by peeping through the key-hole, and placing her ear against the door; foiled, however, in these laudable and praiseworthy attempts, by the low tone of the speakers, she made her way to the housekeeper's apartment, there to indulge in conjectures, wanting in little save that charity which thinketh no evil.

The temporary delirium which had hitherto sustained

Blanche was fast passing away, and as the conscionsness of her situation dawned upon her, she shrunk from the gaze of Conyngham and burst into an agony of tears. He read her thoughts, and soothed her with that voice which, though harsh and imperious to others, was ever low and soft as that of a gentle woman when addressing her.

"Bless you, mine own sweet love; I dared not hope to see you at my side—bless you, dearest. I have been guilty, Blanche—shudder not thus—your purity was winning me back to peace. I was unworthy of you, and now I must lose you forever—'t is bitter, bitter, and yet, with my last gaze lingering on your beloved face, even the bitterness of death will be forgotten."

"Speak not thus, Arthur—have I not braved all? am not I, your betrothed wife, near you? and can I bear to see your eyes closed forever—never to look in mine again—and your lips sealed with the dark seal of eternal silence, never to speak my name? Oh, God! Arthur! Arthur! you cannot *die?*"

A long and agonizing silence succeeded this burst of passionate emotion, interrupted only by the low, half-stifled sobs of Blanche, and the deep groans of Conyngham, as he felt that words were powerless at such a time as this. They were roused from this stupor of grief by a noise at the door, and the voice of the nurse was heard.

"He told me I mustn't come in till I heard the bell ring, and like as not they 'm both dead by this time, for he looked for all the world like a ghost, and the young lady was jest as white as a sheet when I seed her, and he was so contrary he wouldn't even set down on a cheer."

"You had better open the door; they have not heard us knocking."

"Yes, I guess it would be best. Mr. Conyngham, here's a gentleman what's been waitin' an hour to see you."

"Let him come in; nurse, leave us," said Conyngham, feebly, as Edward Ogilby entered the room.

"I have come into your presence unasked, Mr. Conyngham; anxiety for my cousin has made me an intruder, an unwelcome one at any time, doubly so after the events of yesterday."

Arthur attempted to stretch forth his hand; surprised and moved, Edward took it and pressed it kindly in his own.

Blanche sat, or rather crouched, on a low stool at Arthur's side; her fair hair hung in heavy, damp masses round her face and neck. She took no notice of her cousin, her eyes never once moved from Conyngham's face; she trembled lest she might lose one glance, which might be the last, at the same time that she was inwardly persuading herself death could not cloud the lustre of those beloved eyes.

"I am glad you have come, Mr. Ogilby; until yesterday, the madness of my jealousy would not let me see the nobleness of your character. My life,—the life of a rival,—was in your hands, and you generously spared it, after having been treated with hatred and scorn. I am glad you are here. To you I commit a treasure, dear to me as my own soul; although the lightest look of Blanche is dearer to your heart than to the gloating miser could be the ransom of an earl, yet I have no fear that you will torture your cousin by seeking to win her love—another might, but you, I've marked you well, and know you for the soul of honor."

While Conyngham was speaking, he had been gradually

sinking lower and lower in his seat; Ogilby attempted to raise him. "I cursed you once, may God forgive me, and pour his blessing on you. Blanche, come nearer, let me feel your breath upon my cheek—closer, closer, love—here to my heart." There was a pause of a moment, during which Conyngham remained with his eyes closed, holding Blanche strained to his bosom. Suddenly a bright flush suffused his cheek; it was instantly succeeded by a deadly palor; he unclosed his eyes, and fixed them fondly on her who in his last extremity had not deserted him; his arms relaxed their hold—another look, a shriek from Blanche, and all was over.

It was a long time before her cousin could persuade her to leave the body, and when at last she consented, it was with the same calm, composed manner which had before startled him.

Leaving O'Neil, who had called at the hotel to make the necessary arrangements for the burial of the deceased, he conveyed Blanche to her home. Briefly explaining to the family where he had found her, and the circumstance of Conyngham's death, he begged them no longer to be deceived by her calmness, but to watch every movement; for himself, he must return to O'Neil and remain with him until after the funeral.

The stranger's funeral! Who has not at one time or other seen a hearse, attended by a solitary carriage, or by a few followers, not one of whom wore any outward token of mourning. On it went, through streets whose living tide was not arrested by its passing—on it went, and the gay crowd thought not of the blasted hopes, the corroding care, the craving for human sympathy which had gnawed into the heart of the lonely man—on it went, and the man

of business, mentally summing up his balance sheet, hurried carelessly by, and the votaries of fashion, habited in the choicest products of the loom, forgot that the pall and the shroud would yet be their only covering—on it went, unheeded save by some lone wayfarer who was far from his own friends, and his own home, or who had one dear as his life-blood sojourning in distant lands; he would pause and turn aside to hide the tear, the only one which fell at the stranger's funeral!

CHAPTER IX.

Blanche faded daily—there was ever the same calm, mild look, the same sweet tone of gentleness, but it was hourly growing feebler. Edward was continually near her, and if for a moment he left her side, she became restless and uneasy until his return. At length a change came over her; she would watch every opportunity, and endeavor to steal away unperceived. Her cousin feared that she might attempt returning to the city, with the hope of finding the grave of Conyngham, and his care over her was unceasing, but at last she contrived to elude even his loving vigilance.

The family were again thrown into a state of the most harrowing anxiety. Edward endeavored to soothe his relatives, but without avail; the search had continued for hours, when Harry and the wretched Edward again set out, the former taking the highway, and the latter striking into the woods. In one of their summer rambles, Mary

had pointed out to him a spot which had been a favorite haunt of her sister's, and where Conyngham and Blanche had been in the habit of sitting together for hours; to this spot he now bent his weary steps. It was one of those bright, warm days of sunshine which sometimes burst upon us at the close of autumn, smiling as if summer had returned to take a last farewell, and lovingly look down upon her old haunts where winter is so soon to leave his desolating foot-marks.

In a nook, sheltered by a projecting rock, and hiding in its bosom a spot of soft verdure, near which oozed a small stream whose low tricklings fell dreamily on the ear, reclined Blanche Acheson. A sunbeam rested on her face, lighting up the snowy brow with all the glory of seraphic beauty—one hand supported her head, the other, on the slender finger of which gleamed a turquoise, a gift from Arthur, was pressed to her heart, and Edward well knew that under it lay the jewelled likeness of him for whom her love had been stronger than death. He stooped down—she was cold as monumental marble. He called her name in tones of the deepest agony—she heeded not—she heard not—he was alone with the dead! and, for the first time, his arms enfolded the form, and his lips were pressed to the cheek of his long-adored cousin.

"I have fulfilled my trust, Arthur Conyngham, I spoke not of my love to thy betrothed. I pained not the ears of thy affianced with my words of passion, but the bride of death can wear my kisses on her cheek, my tears upon her brow, without a stain reflecting on my honor. Blanche! Blanche! would to God my life had saved thine own!"

Raising the inanimate form, and bearing it with the fond gentleness with which a guardian spirit bears a saint

to Paradise, Edward Ogilby retraced with solemn step his way to the house. He was met by Mrs. Acheson and Mary, who were waiting, in a state bordering on distraction, the return of those who had gone to seek the lost.

"Mother, she has fainted. Edward is carrying her in his arms."

"My poor sufferer! may God pity her! Heaven bless you, my dear nephew, for your kindness to my child."

Edward spake not; Blanche's head lay on his shoulder, and his bloodless cheek was pressed close to hers. Mrs. Acheson and Mary were awe-struck, and durst not question him. They reached the house, he passed onward to his cousin's chamber, and laid the body on a couch; not a word had yet been spoken; the mother and sister were bewildered with terror.

"Look at her, aunt—look at her, Mary—to-day she was to have been wedded, and Arthur Conyngham has claimed his bride." It was indeed the day which had been fixed upon for the marriage of Blanche, and there was mourning and sorrow in the house which should have echoed with the tones of love and joy.

Ogilby left the house, and after wandering all day returned. His appearance was haggard in the extreme. It seemed as if the sorrows of twenty years had within the last few weeks stricken his frame. He sat most of the night alone by his cousin's bier, and it was only through repeated persuasions that his uncle could prevail on him to retire. The morning found him with a burning fever, delirious, raving incessantly of Conyngham and Blanche. At times he would fancy Arthur dead, and his cousin about to become his bride, then all the love which had been hiddenly preying on his heart was poured forth in a lavish profusion

of the fondest and most endearing epithets. Again he would see Conyngham claiming her hand at the altar, and bearing her from his presence, and then the most frantic words, accompanied by groans which agonized the soul, fell on the ears of his friends.

The body of Blanche was laid in its narrow home, in the cold, damp earth, but Edward knew it not. For two weeks his disorder baffled the skill of the physicians. As his reason slowly returned, all that had occurred passed before him, and he knew that he should never look upon his cousin's face again!

Supported by O'Neil and Fortescue, he visited her grave, the friends withdrew—sorrow such as his was too sacred for even the eye of friendship to behold. Long and passionately did he weep, prostrated on the earth that covered her remains. There lay the treasure in which his heart was garnered—there lay the being whose image had been with him in the mountain and the dell, in the forest and by the stream of his native land—there lay the star whose light was to him a gleam of Paradise, quenched and lost in the dark valley of the shadow of death.

Oh, fearful are those conflicts of the soul!—fearful is it to see the strong man bowed to the feebleness of infancy! Well has it been said by a gifted one, "If there is an all-absorbing passion in the human soul, it is love!" He who in the strife with men is brave, bold, and unyielding, will thrill and tremble at the look of a weak girl—haughty though he be, stern and imperious, one gentle smile will bend him to her will. And woman! the world hath many a record of her deep devotedness; and could the veil with which the sensitive and shrinking so closely shroud them-

selves from common gaze, be drawn aside, the world would read ten thousand records of her fond and patient endurance.

CHAPTER X.

"THE vessel sails to-morrow, my dear uncle, in which Fortescue and myself return to our native land; the remembrance of your kindness will go with us, and I know that your prayers will ascend for your sister's orphan child."

"God bless me, Ned, why do you leave us?—stay, my dear boy, and be to me a son in my old age. Never was sister more devotedly loved by a brother than your mother was by me. My poor Blanche! what a fond, warm-hearted letter we received from her when she heard that my baby-girl was to be called by her name, and now—they are both gone!—my sister and my child!"

"Let me plead with Mr. Acheson that you will not leave us, my dear nephew. You have been with us in those hours which knit hearts most firmly together—in our hours of sorrow and bereavement—you were the untiring watcher over our beloved child. Stay with us, Edward, and through the years in which God is pleased to spare us to each other, we will strive to pay you back some part of our debt of love."

"Will you not stay with us, cousin?" said Mary, throwing her arms about his neck, and looking with tearful eyes in his face. O'Neil stood by, but there was no jealousy in his heart now, and he joined his pleadings with the rest.

"My dearest friends, it pains me to the soul to refuse your request, but it may not be—this is no longer a land for me to dwell in—Harry will remain with you, but, for me, I must away."

That night Edward and O'Neil sat together until near morning, talking over the events of their past life, and of Harry's hopes and anticipations for the future.

"I am thankful, my dear friend, that your day is still unclouded. In Mary Acheson you will possess a sunny treasure of all womanly virtue. Her disposition is like your own, ever ready to look at the bright side of the picture, yet tremblingly alive to the griefs and sorrows of her friends. You know I am not an advocate for the opinions of those who contend that opposite tastes and tempers harmonize best in wedded life. To have a man whose heart is all sunshine, whose soul is all love, whose mind has been long familiar with the treasures of learning and of art, and whose taste has become fastidiously refined, united to a cold-hearted, frivolous, fashionable woman, who cares for none of these things, think you there can be happiness there?

"Or, to have a woman, a gentle, holy, and imaginative woman, whose heart is filled with the poetry of life, and who has revelled in the burning pages of the lords of song —a woman who would bring the stores of a cultivated intellect to make happy her husband's home, and shed a beauty round the common things of every-day existence—to have such a being wedded to one who found his pleasure in the midnight crowd, and from whom the sweet thoughts ever ready to gush from her lips must be hidden, lest they meet a sarcasm or a sneer, think you there could be happiness there?"

"No, Edward; what is quaintly told by good old Izaak Walton of the sainted George Herbert and his wife, 'that there never was any opposition betwixt them, unless it were a contest which should most incline to a compliance with the other's desires,' has ever been before me in my dreams of wedded life. You know Mary, and you know that my dreams are about to be realized."

"I know it, and thank heaven for it Harry; and now I have one request—you will not think it weakness—when the pleasant spring-time comes, look for the first violet and plant it on Blanche's grave—it was her favorite flower, and it is mine, too, Harry—and when you write me, pluck some of the hallowed blossoms and send them over the sea to our distant land. I will never see you more, Harry—of this I am confident, but the days we have passed together will linger pleasantly in my memory, and my thoughts will often wander to your home. God bless you, Harry, I will not see any of the family again. Fortescue and I have arranged to leave at day-break."

There came one letter from Edward, thanking Harry for his gift of flowers—another, stating that Fortescue and he had gone abroad—the third was from his friend—Edward was no more!

Late in October they reached Pisa, intending to pass the winter. As the last of the month drew nigh, Fortescue endeavored to engage Edward's attention, that if possible the time might pass unnoticed, but memory's note-book held too faithful a record of the past. On the night of the 30th he repeatedly drew out his watch, as if anxious for some particular hour to arrive. At last he exclaimed, "This is the hour—the hour on which Blanche bade us good-night twelve months ago—it was her last pleasant,

sweet 'good-night'—leave me, Guy—I know that you will bear a little longer with my weakness—to-morrow night is Hallowe'en—you shall stay with me then, Guy—leave me now, I entreat you."

It was with great reluctance that Fortescue complied with his friend's urgent wish, and left him alone for the night.

The next day Ogilby was confined to his room. During the morning he was weary and exhausted, and in a state of partial stupor, but as night came on he grew restless and feverish, raving incessantly about Blanche.

"She has not yet extinguished her light—I'll watch her closely—why did she love Arthur Conyngham?—ha, her room is dark—quite dark. God watch over you until the morrow, sweet one."

As in a dream words and deeds long past will array themselves vividly before the mind of the sleeper, so in the ravings of Edward's delirium he was again enacting the watcher over his cousin, again repeating words which had been uttered.

Toward midnight he turned to Fortescue, and in a calm, rational tone asked the hour.

"It is past eleven; try and compose yourself to sleep."

"I shall soon sleep," said the invalid, with a wan smile. "Blanche has long been sleeping, and the world has been dark to me since her dear eyes were closed. You see this," said he, feebly, showing a small parcel which was fastened to a black riband worn about his neck; "let them not take it from me when I'm dead, Guy, but lay it on my heart—it contains the withered violets from the grave of Blanche, —my cousin!—my cousin!" His head fell back—Fortescue bent over him—the lips were yet murmuring,

"Blanche! Blanche!" All was still; that noble, loving heart at last was broken; and a slender shaft of white marble, in the English burying-ground at Pisa, covers all that was mortal of Edward Ogilby.

"It is now two years since Blanche's death; may I not claim your promise?" said O'Neil as he sat by Mary Acheson, who was half abstractedly turning over some fine engravings he had that morning brought from town.

Sorrow had subdued the exuberance of Mary's spirits, and lent a new grace to her beauty, and a shade of thoughtfulness had settled on the bright face of Harry, giving a more manly tone to his handsome features.

"May I not claim your promise?—speak, love; say that I may. Your heart is mine, Mary, why any longer keep your hand from me?"

It was not kept, and the next week saw Harry O'Neil the happiest of mortals, as he kissed from the cheek of his bride tears which were falling at the remembrance of her sister's early doom.

The Farmer's Daughter.

CHAPTER I.

MARTIN Greene was a thrifty, industrious New England farmer, living on the old homestead left from father to son for three successive generations; yearly tilling the soil which gave him back no niggardly reward for his labor, and blessing God for the ever-bountiful harvest.

No fields bore better grain, no orchards finer fruit, than those of Martin Greene. In kind, plump, pleasant-faced Mrs. Greene, the farmer had indeed a true help-meet. She made the sweetest butter and the best cheese in the country, and her well-filled presses, groaning under the weight of home-made linen, and home-woven cloth, were the wonder of chance city visitors, and the envy of not-so-well-to-do-in-the-world housewives. The eldest daughter, Hetty, was, as her mother said, "a clever, sensible girl, her right hand man," as the good woman oddly expressed it. Hetty was in truth a right hand to her parent. In summer she rose with the sun, and tripped away with bench and pail to milk the well-fed cows. She worked briskly at the churn, and gathered the firm curd, and pressed the cheese, sometimes infusing it with the juice of sage,

and at others making those delicious cream cakes which are nowhere so tempting as on a farmer's table. Well might mother Greene call Hetty her right hand man!

Two boys had died in their infancy, and the farmer had but one other child beside Hetty. This was Lizzy, who had opened her blue, wondering eyes just ten years after her sister first saw the light.

Lizzy was the pet and plaything of the house. Her pretty little lips, like a half-parted rose-bud, where the bee lingers lovingly, were always upturned for a kiss. The soft, shining curls shadowed her pure forehead and dimpled cheek, and floated over her round, white neck like a stray mesh of golden sunbeams. Ever singing like a bird, ever skipping like her own pet lamb, was bright, gleesome, loving hearted Lizzy Greene; and thus passed her years of childhood, dancing through the meadows, tossed to and fro among the hay, laughing at her own pleasant fancies till all near her caught the spirit of her innocent mirth, and laughed with her without well knowing why. As she grew older, and strength and knowledge came with years, she was still a privileged being, her mother and sister working on cheerfully, sometimes wondering why Lizzy did not come and help them, but always finding a ready apology for her remissness. They both knew that Lizzy's sensitive nature could ill bear rebuke, and they loved her too well, their petted one, to bring a tear to her eye, or a pang to her heart. Then she was so delicate, so lady-like, it would be a pity not to give her every advantage; and after much cogitation the worthy farmer and his wife thought it best to send their darling to a boarding-school, where she might receive a finished education.

It was a sad parting, that of Lizzy from her home. Again and again did she clasp her arms about her mother's neck, and kiss her weeping sister, and look round on each familiar thing as if she were never to behold them more. But partings, however painful, must have an end, and at last Lizzy and her father were seated in the covered wagon which was to convey them part of their journey.

Greatly awed was Lizzy, when introduced to the presence of Madame Clinquante, the stylish lady who presided over the seminary for young ladies in Brookville, and with fluttering heart, and thoughts in strange confusion, the young country girl almost wished she could return home with her father. With a slightly supercilious air, the fashionable instructress glanced from honest Mr. Greene to his daughter. Horror of horrors, how antiquated the cut of his coat, and how far behind the mode the shape of his daughter's bonnet! But as the good man made no objections to her extravagant charges, and placed his daughter wholly under her control, Madame Clinquante thought it as well to conceal the feelings caused by their rustic appearance, and graciously condescended to receive "Miss Elizabeth" as a pupil.

How frozen and formal everything appeared to Lizzy after her father's departure! When she made her appearance at the tea-table, and glanced timidly at the stiff-looking, premature women, who were staring at her short-waisted gingham dress, her tears began to flow, silently at first, but when she saw one of the young ladies pull another by the sleeve, point to where she sat, and strive to suppress a titter, poor Lizzy wept outright, and longed to be seated by her sister Hetty, at their own fireside. A long time elapsed before the hitherto untrammeled girl,

who had been accustomed to bound like a young fawn, could be trained to walk with the soft, mincing pace practised by her schoolmates, or to attain that perfection of the Grecian bend, once absurdly looked upon as graceful. Her voice, too, which had ever been clear and musical, must now be sunk to the lowest tones, at times not more than half audible.

But none of this frigid schooling chilled her heart, which bounded as warmly beneath her fashionably-lengthened silk bodice, as it had done under her short-waisted gingham dress. Yet Lizzy was changed, and, almost unknown to herself, placed an undue value on advantages in themselves merely accidental. Once or twice only had Mrs. Greene and Hetty accompanied the farmer on his visits to the boarding school, and on these occasions, Madame Clinquante's manner was thoroughly calculated to impress them with her great superiority, particularly when she asked them to stay for dinner, and when a few departures from established etiquette made Lizzy blush for her mother and sister. But Mrs. Greene thought only of the advantages conferred upon her daughter by being under the charge of such a lady, and vague visions of future greatness for her darling floated through her brain.

At stated periods Madame Clinquante's reception rooms were thrown open to visitors, and then were the young ladies dressed in a showy manner, and called upon to exhibit their various acquirements before the admiring guests. What a field of display! What a school for vanity was here! It was no private examination where impartial judges might decide upon the advancement of the pupils in knowledge truly useful. It proceeded not from the kind desire to charm a home circle by the quiet exer-

cise of graceful accomplishments. No, it was a jealous struggle as to who should make themselves most agreeable to the young gentlemen who turned the pages of their music, or were their partners in the dance, and by whom they were praised and flattered in the language of silly and empty compliment. And in such a school as the seminary for young ladies at Brookville, and under such an instructress as Madame Clinquante, Lizzy Greene finished her education.

We have said before that Lizzy's heart was warm as ever, and on her return home she seemed unchanged. But soon the constant work, work, work, which she saw on every side became distasteful to her, and instead of accompanying her mother to the dairy, or her father to the orchard, she would sit for hours at the piano, which had found its way into the best room, and sigh for the artificial stimulus that once roused her energies into action. Ah, Lizzy, Lizzy, why did your too indulgent parents spoil a country girl with a city lady's finished education!

CHAPTER II.

"Well, I do wish our Lizzy would take a liking to Morris Wilson," said Mrs. Greene to her husband, as they were walking together in the lane which led from their house; "he's such a good steady young man, and owns such a fine farm, and then she'd be so near us, do you try and persuade her to it."

"There is no use in trying to persuade her, I fear," re-

plied the farmer with a sigh, "Lizzy's not like the girl she was, and Morris Wilson is too plain and blunt-like to suit her notions."

"But he is so kind-hearted, and honest, and upright, and he raises better grain than any of the young men about here. I'm sure he would make her an excellent husband, for I believe he loves the very ground she walks on."

"Yes, I think he does, and I often pity him when he is trying to do little things he thinks will please her, and she looks so coldly on him. Once I did hope to have Morris for a son-in-law, and I thought Lizzy had a kind of bashful liking for him, but if she ever had it is all over now, and sorry am I; for as you say, wife, he would make her an excellent husband."

"Well, if I thought Lizzy stood a chance of marrying a gentleman, and living in style as they did at Madame *Clinkee's*, I'd not say another word about Morris, for I think somehow Lizzy is not well calculated for a farmer's wife, though I've heard Morris say he'd never want his wife to work, only just to superintend like."

"And without our Lizzy pays more attention to what is going on about the house, I'm afraid she will never be able even to superintend. It was hardly right to send her so long to that boarding school."

"It was done for the best, and there's no knowing what good may come of it yet. But I'm sorry she don't take more after her sister, for if it wa'n't for the help I get from Hetty, I should never be able to manage and keep things to rights."

On returning from their walk, farmer Greene and his wife were surprised at seeing a dashing-looking equipage

standing near the paling in front of their house. On entering, they found Lizzy all smiles and blushes, talking to a strange young gentleman, whom she introduced to her parents as Mr. Vinton, a friend of Madame Clinquante.

Mr. Vinton informed the good people that he was travelling for the summer, and finding himself in their neighborhood, he could not resist the temptation of calling on Miss Elizabeth, whose acquaintance he had made during her last year's residence at Brookville.

Charmed with his affable and pleasing manners, farmer Greene shook him cordially by the hand, and pressed him to stay for dinner, which was then in the course of preparation. The invitation was politely declined by the visitor, while at the same time he carelessly remarked, "that he might remain a few days in the vicinity, and trusted he should have the pleasure of seeing them again," then shaking hands with the old people, and bowing to Lizzy, Mr. Vinton took his leave.

That night as usual, Morris Wilson was at Mr. Greene's, and Lizzy's manner toward him was colder than ever. They were all seated under the front porch, and somehow one after another stole away, until Morris and Lizzy were left alone together, she, absorbed in thought, with her eyes fixed on the cloudless full moon sailing calmly through the sky, and wholly unconscious of her companion's presence. Morris had never directly spoken to her of the wish that lay nearest his heart. He was in love, and true love ever begets a feeling of deference toward the object beloved, and a lowly opinion of one's own merits. He knew himself wanting in the polish to which Lizzy had for the last three years been accustomed, and since her return he had been on the point of taking lessons from a travelling dan-

cing-master; nay he went so far as to buy a flute, hoping some day to delight his idol with his melodious music. Simple-hearted Morris Wilson!

He was, as we have said, left alone with her he loved. How beautiful she looked in the softening moonlight, with her white dress, and the knot of heart's-ease in her bosom! Yes, he would tell her of his love, of his hopes, of his fears, and he would plead that she might one day be his own—his treasured one, his wife. Oh, how his heart bounded at the thought! to call *her* wife! That name, so bright with heart-truth, with happiness, so full of every endearing, every tender and holy joy that clusters around home. Yes, he would ask Lizzy to be his wife!

But Morris was seized with a nervous trepidation when he laid his hand on hers, his tongue faltered, and he could but articulate, "Lizzy!"

The young girl turned, and looking full upon him, withdrew her hand. "Lizzy!" again murmured Morris—for a few moments there was an embarrassing silence, and then summoning his fast-failing courage, briefly and truthfully the lover urged his suit.

"Mr. Wilson, I am sorry to hear this, I always looked upon you as a friend of my parents, and in no other light can I ever regard you."

"In no other light! oh, Lizzy, do not say so, I am willing to wait, and if we were more together you might think differently. I know I have not the refinement that you have, Lizzy, but you could make me what you wish, for I love you with my whole soul, I do, indeed, Lizzy. Stay only one moment longer, don't turn so coldly from me."

"Morris Wilson." Morris raised his eyes to the speak-

er. Like dew-drops on the rose-leaf, the tears were trembling on Lizzy's cheek, and the lover gained new hope.

"I thought you could not be so cruel, you will bid me wait, will you not, Lizzy? oh, if you knew how fondly I have loved you from your childhood, from the time that I, a great lubberly boy, carried your satchel to the school-house, and contrived to be in the way when you were returning home, that I might find an excuse for lifting you over the stones, and carrying you round the pond in the meadow, and how my heart beat when I caught you up in my arms, and tossed you into the hay, while you were shaking the curls over your eyes and playing bo-peep with me."

"Do not speak thus, Morris, you grieve me. I would not willingly pain any one, much less you, who have always been as a brother to me; be to me a friend; I know this sounds coldly, well then, I will not ask it. Dislike me, if you will, Morris, but try and forget that you have ever cared for me, and I may yet see you happy with one who is worthy of you, and who can return your love."

"And is this final, Lizzy? can you give me no hope? or, tell me—do you care for another?"

"This latter is a question you have no right to ask," said the girl proudly; "no, I can give you no hope."

"And I can give no other woman my heart. Yes, I will be your friend, Lizzy; for, God help me, this love has grown too deep ever to be rooted out!"

Lizzy was touched by the sorrowful tone of the speaker, and with impulsive earnestness she clasped Morris's hand in hers, and raised it to her lips. It was the error of a moment, and before she was aware of it, he whom she had refused as a lover pressed his lips to her forehead, and sought to circle her waist.

"Morris, Morris, I did wrong, I should have left you at once; it is my fault that you have thus forgotten yourself; when I said that I could give you no hope, why did I allow my conduct to belie my words? oh, Morris, I did wrong, but I could not help it, I saw you suffering and sought to soothe you, but it was wrong, Morris, it was wrong!"

"And so it is all over, and this may be our last meeting, Lizzy, for I cannot trust myself in your presence; now Heaven give me help!"

Lizzy went up to her little chamber with a heavy heart. She watched the figure of Morris as it retreated in the distance, and wept to think she was the cause of his unhappiness. His pleadings had recalled by-gone acts of kindness, which she had always received as if coming from a brother, and now when he told her the happiness of his life was in her keeping, she could give him but her chary friendship for his wealth of love. What woman of keen sensibilities but would be pained under circumstances like these? How could she look with cold indifference upon the man who in the warm abandonment of a true heart had proffered her his all? With the heartless coquette, such devotion but ministers sweet incense to her vanity, and the woman devoid of principle may triumph in her conquest over hearts, and boast her refusal of proffered hands. Lizzy was neither, and but for the instinctive delicacy which told her it was wrong, she could have wept with Morris, and in the tenderest manner have striven to soothe the sorrow of her disappointed lover.

Poor Morris Wilson! for years his hopes had centred in one object. For this, he had toiled late and early, for this, his grain was the finest, and his meadow the smooth-

est, for this, his farm-house was the neatest, and his paling the whitest, in the country round. For this, the fragrant honey-suckle, and the heavy-scented syringa, and the tall rose of Sharon, bloomed beside his door. For this, the dove-cote had been hung in the poplar before the porch, and the rose-bushes in the garden had been grafted, and the stepping-stones placed in the brook, and the rustic arbor reared on the hill beneath the sun-lit branches of the twin elms. All had been for this—for this!—for what?—that Lizzy might be the mistress, the queen of his world of home!

What wonder when he found that all had been for naught—when he knew that Lizzy's hand would never feed the doves, nor pull the flowers, when he knew that she would never sit beneath the porch, as his own, his loved and loving wife, what wonder that Morris Wilson turned in bitterness from the many objects of his care?

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Vinton was the very pattern of amiability and courtesy to her equals, but proud, haughty and arrogant to her inferiors. Married to an easy, good-tempered man, who inherited a large property, she was enabled to gratify every caprice which her ambition or her vanity suggested. After half a lifetime devoted to folly, finery and fashion at home, she determined on going abroad. A few months were spent in posting through Germany and Italy, when she settled down for a four years' residence in Paris, and

here the crowning glory was given to her "vaulting ambition," by the marriage of her daughter to a *roué* and a title. On her return to Boston, her increased *hauteur* of manner made her unbearable to those who were in any way dependent on her, and her frequent allusions to "my daughter, the countess," rendered her the secret laughing-stock of half her acquaintance.

Alfred Vinton was, like his father, extremely good-natured, and having a bountiful supply of money always at command, was easily initiated into the *liberties* of *jeune* France, and learned to quaff his wine and bet his gold with perfect freedom. But a habit was forming, a love for the Circean draught of pleasure, which, if not resisted in time, will bind the strongest in bands of iron.

Though little more than twenty, in the very spring-time of his life, the dawning of his manhood, Alfred Vinton was fast becoming a debauchee. Except in a certain air of lassitude, usually dispelled by the strong morning stimulant, except in this, and an appearance of being older than he really was, no outward signs yet told of the nightly orgies which were sapping his life to its foundation.

It was not long after his return from Paris with his parents that he accompanied his mother to Madame Clinquante's, on a visit to an orphan cousin who had been placed in the academy at Brookville. An invitation to one of Madame's soirées was declined by Mrs. Vinton, but accepted by her son, who, after a brief introduction, chatted and danced during the greater part of the evening with Lizzy Greene. The freshness of this young girl's mind, unhackneyed as she was in the ways of fashionable life, the frankness and warmth of soul that breathed in her every word and action, were in such charming contrast with the

affected and conventional manners of the young ladies by whom she was surrounded, that Alfred's heart was taken captive unawares, and he became a frequent visitor at Madame Clinquante's until Lizzy left the seminary.

After her departure he resolved to see her again, and trust to chance for the success of his wooing, and thus resolving, it was not long before he took up his abode in farmer Greene's vicinity. He soon ingratiated himself into the good graces of the old people, and Mrs. Greene was delighted with his marked attention to Lizzy; even the good farmer was so far brought under the influence of his wife, as to think that, after all, the girl might do better than by taking Morris Wilson for a husband. Could Alfred Vinton have borne away Lizzy from her home without the promise of making her his wife, he would not have scrupled to do so, but he knew this to be impossible; Lizzy loved him, but her's was a love that would not stoop to degradation. One day the old gentleman spoke to Alfred on the subject of his daily visits, and with a father's solicitude wished to know whether Mr. or Mrs. Vinton knew of his attentions to Lizzy. The young man said they did, and he reluctantly confessed that his mother urged his return home, as she never could consent to such an allianee.

Farmer Greene was proud in his own way, as proud as Mrs. Vinton was in hers. He declared that no child of his should creep into a family clandestinely, that he considered his Lizzy had come of as good and honest people as the best of them, and he thought her quite as much of a lady as any he had seen at Brookville. To all this Alfred assented, and endeavored to conciliate the good man by saying, that if Lizzy were once his wife, and could she

be seen by his mother, he doubted not that lady would be proud to receive her as a daughter. But this would not satisfy Mr. Greene, and all further visiting at the house was prohibited.

Yet Alfred would not thus be baffled, he contrived occasionally to meet Lizzy in her walks, and to have notes conveyed to her through his servant. In vain did Lizzy, fearful of the weakness of her own loving heart, beg Alfred to leave the place. But he knew too well his vantage-ground, and pleaded with such earnestness that she whom he idolized would allow him to meet her but once at the old trysting-place, that at last Lizzy's resolution gave way, and, with trembling steps and remorseful conscience, she went to her first stolen interview.

"I cannot come again, do not ask it, Alfred," she replied to the urgent entreaties of her lover, "already am I lowered by thus meeting you without the knowledge of my parents; it is so humiliating to act a falsehood; oh, do not urge me, Alfred, I am but a poor weak girl, and when I see you so grieved at the thought of parting, all my good resolves seem to fail me; now that I have laid open my heart and let you see its weakness, be generous, do not urge me, Alfred."

But Alfred's love was no holy, self-sacrificing passion. He did urge Lizzy, and he plied her with sophisms to show that there could be no harm in her meeting him but *once* again, and soon moonlight and starlight saw Lizzy Greene at the end of the orchard where it joined the wood, seated on the trunk of a fallen tree, with her hand close locked in that of her lover!

"Why what makes Lizzy stay so long at Susan Jansen's to-night," said Mrs. Greene, returning from the door where

she had long stood watching for her daughter, "I didn't know as they was going to have any company to-day, and she's not been to home since two o'clock. I guess you'd better go and fetch her, Mr. Greene."

"Yes, I have been thinking about going this half-hour, I'll not be gone long, so just tell Hetty to keep the bone-set tea warm, for my cold is getting rather troublesome."

After a long time, as it appeared to Mrs. Greene and Hetty, the farmer returned—he was alone!

"Goodness! where's Lizzy? what made you leave her any longer?" Mr. Greene made no reply, but tottered to a chair; his face was pale and his looks disordered.

"Father," said Hetty, as she took his hat which he held listlessly in his hand, "father, what has happened? where is Lizzy?"

"I don't know; she has not been at Jansen's since three o'clock."

"Mercy on me," exclaimed Mrs. Greene, "why didn't you go to Smith's and Tompkin's; she may have dropped in to see the girls."

"I did, she was in neither place, and I fear, I fear—"

"What? what? tell me quickly, what do you fear, Martin?"

"That she has gone with young Vinton. George Jansen told me he saw him pass their house not ten minutes before Lizzy left it, and Seth Tompkins said, when he was coming from mill, young Vinton's carriage passed him with a lady in it, but the driver made the horses fly so fast, he couldn't get a sight of her face."

"My God," said the poor heart-stricken mother, "our Lizzy gone away from us!"

It was too true. She, the petted, the caressed, the lady-

bird of the household, the idolized of her parents' hearts, the pride of her country home, she had forsaken all to go with Alfred Vinton, and become the dweller in a city!

CHAPTER IV.

At the window of an apartment which looked toward the west stood a female watching the broad, red disc of the setting sun, as it gradually neared the verge of the horizon. Lower and lower it sank. The molten masses of clouds it had fused and flung abroad in glowing beauty, were fast assuming that dull gray, leaden hue, with which the last vestige of fading twilight deepens into night. One narrow belt of fire alone remained. Remained as if it knew an anxious face were watching its decline. As if it knew that heart-throbs increased in agony as its brightness was withdrawn. Lower and lower—it quivers—it is gone! oh, fondly superstitious human heart, why link thy hopes with such an omen?

For awhile the female stood, statue-like, with clasped hands, and eyes gazing on the far-off heavens.

"Oh, God! it is all over. I said that his return before the setting sun should be an omen of good—a pledge that he would yet redeem himself—an earnest that his word was sacred. He is not here. It is all over! oh, merciful One! there is no hope!"

Why are there moments in life, when the strongest minded yield to a superstitious dread? Why is it that at times there is a chill creeping of the blood, an involuntary

shudder, as if the wing of a spirit had touched us in passing by? Whence the awe that we feel when left at night alone with the dead? We know they cannot look on us in anger—they cannot speak to us unkindly—they cannot loosen their icy bands, and overpower our weak natures with the shock of seeing the dead start suddenly to life. We know all this, and yet we tread softly, as if afraid of awaking them, we approach reverently as into a pure and holy presence, and we turn away tremblingly, and seek the society of those who yet tabernacle in the flesh.

Why is all this? Is there but the veil of sense drawn between the outer world and the world unseen? Why do some look to the blooming or withering of a flower, some to the appearing or disappearing of a star, and others to the rising or setting of the sun—as auguries of evil or of good? We cannot fathom why! We but know that it is so, and that, by nine out of ten, in this matter-of-fact world, it is called superstition!

Slowly the female turned from the window and seated herself near the fire. Its ruddy light beamed full upon her face, which was very pale and sad, and the cheerful glow fell on her small hands as if wishing to warm the poor heart over which they were clasped. A servant entered, placed lights upon the table, and silently withdrew. The apartments had that air of simple elegance which always betokens the residence of a gentle spirit. The snowy embroidery blended its gossamer folds with the soft, blue damask which curtained the windows, and fell in wavy beauty to the floor. There were small, antique-shaped porcelain vases, filled with fragrant flowers; there were books, enriched with the rarest dreams of the painter and the poet; and there was music, waiting but the touch to gush

in sweetness from its airy cell. And she, the mistress of this beautiful home—cannot all these treasures rouse her from the painful reverie into which she has fallen? Ah, no! Memory and conscience are at work. She sees her own fond parents grieving sorely, even as she has grieved over her own dead child. She knows that she has forsaken them in their old age, and therefore has no claim on the rewards promised to the dutiful and obedient. She has been waiting and watching for him with whom she fled, and the omen has been of evil, which her fondly credulous heart had hoped would be of good. And now when she longs for the old familiar voices of her early home, when her heart is panting for one loving breast on which to lean and weep her sorrow, Elizabeth Vinton sits alone, with Memory and with Conscience!

Two years have passed since Lizzy Greene was tempted by her lover to leave her father's house. When Alfred Vinton thought they were beyond the reach of pursuit, he made the weeping girl his wife; but it was a secret marriage, and was to remain such, until his mother could be induced to receive Lizzy as her daughter-in-law.

Alfred vainly supposed that his mother's anger would be of short duration, and that when she found he was actually married, her pride would give way, and he be reinstated in her favor. He had therefore taken Lizzy to Boston, and placed her in lodgings, where she was to remain until the favorable moment arrived. But day after day, he met his wife's tearful inquiries with the same answer, his mother was inexorable. Lizzy tried hard to bear up under her trial, which was now assuming a most serious aspect. The people in the house, where she lodged, grew coldly civil to her. If she came unawares upon a group of ladies talking to-

gether, they would bow formally and leave the place. She felt like a shunned thing, yet she knew not why she was so. At length some vague rumors reached her, and with a shudder, she learned that the breath of suspicion had sullied her fair fame, that she was looked upon as Mr. Vinton's paramour! Oh, agony of agonies, to a young, pure heart. Oh, torture, bordering on madness, to the woman in whose spirit a lofty honor sits enthroned! Charitable in her judgment of others, severe alone to herself, had another been placed in her situation, had another even been, what she was suspected of being, Lizzy would have pitied the erring one, and forborne to add to her humiliation. But compassion for the individual can exist with abhorrence of the crime, and often the woman who grieves most deeply for the errors of her sex, would be well-nigh maddened at the imputation of such error to herself. Thus was it with Lizzy, and for a fortnight, while her husband had gone as she supposed on business to a neighboring city, did she writhe under her disgrace. On Alfred's return, she timidly ventured to inform him of what had occurred during his absence, and begged him no longer to keep their marriage a secret from the world. He made but little reply, save that they would soon leave their present abode; and in a short time he took her to an elegantly-furnished house, of which he told her they and their servants were to be the sole occupants.

Months passed away in total seclusion, and Lizzy forgot her sorrows in anticipation of the fond maternal joys that might soon be hers. But ere the mother's consciousness after suffering was fully restored, ere she could press her darling's soft lip to hers, and feel its warm breath upon her cheek, and nestle its little head in her bosom, ere she

could fold it to her heart and say, "God bless thee, my baby-love," the young soul had flitted back to paradise.

Fast on the footsteps of life, followed the tread of death. One glance on the new world which it had entered, one hopeless cry of suffering, one convulsive throe, and it was gone! The mother's heart had lost its dearest jewel, but another star was in the sky! The mother's ear had lost its sweetest music, but the banded cherubim was listening to another harp? Mourn not, oh, thou bereft! thy baby "is an angel now!" Ah, it is not in the first burst of passionate grief that the childless mother can cease to mourn. Her face is covered and they think her sleeping, but she has turned away to hide her sorrow, and to "water her couch with tears." In the solemn hush of the lonely hours of night, she presses her hands convulsively upon her breast and sobs—"oh, that it lay here!" Even long after others have forgotten that she has lost a child, when all outward signs of sorrow have passed away, the mother's hand softly unfolds her infant's tiny robes, and lays them by again with gentle care; the mother's heart wanders to the green churchyard, and longs to still its beatings on the baby's quiet bed.

Poor, poor Lizzy! for a few days only did her husband seem to feel the loss, and then with renewed zest he turned to his debasing pleasures.

It was while sorrow for the loss of her child was still most acute, that she stood watching the declining sun, and waiting the return of her husband. He had promised to be home ere nightfall, but so often had he failed in his promises that none save a wife would have looked for their fulfilment. She had once more cheated herself into the belief that he would yet fling off the vile shackles that

were chaining him in the mire of sensuality, and rise a renewed, a regenerated man; and her credulous heart, after losing every firmer stay, had linked its hopes to a fallacious omen. But he came not. The clock ticked on and on, and sounded the alarm as hour after hour flew away in the dim halls of the silent past—the fire flickered feebly, no longer casting its ruddy glow full on the pale face of the watcher, but leaving it half buried in shadow—the lights were burning low in their sockets, and coldness and gloom, twin-children of sorrow and night, were brooding over the deserted home.

Toward morning Elizabeth was roused from an uneasy slumber by a noise in front of the house. Its meaning was but too well known to her, and trembling with uncontrollable agitation, she went to the front door and opened it. A speechless mass of inebriety, her husband was carried in and laid on the sofa. It was thus he had kept his promise! "No hope! no hope!" groaned the poor heart-broken wife as she threw herself into a chair to pray and weep, and in the fitful slumber brought on by sheer exhaustion, to dream of her lost babe, and start at the sound of her mother's voice, calling as of old for "Lizzy."

When Vinton was roused from his stupor, he informed his wife of many things which he had hitherto concealed from her. His father had died two months since, and to the last under the entire control of his wife, had executed a will leaving his son a mere pittance. Exasperated at such treatment, Alfred remonstrated with his mother on its injustice, and swore that he would now bring his wife forward, and introduce her to his mother's friends. On this announcement Mrs. Vinton had a severe spasmodic attack, from which, however, she fortunately recovered, in

time to retreat gracefully before the *mésalliance* was bruited abroad, and rather abruptly took her departure for Europe with the purpose of residing in future with "my daughter, the countess!"

And now Vinton's career was daily downward. At length disease in its most appalling form seized upon him. The glaring eye, the dilated nostril, and the compressed lip, betrayed the madman!

Ten thousand furies were haunting him. Ten thousand fiends were glaring from the ceiling—from the corners of the room—from the curtains of the bed—and their eyes were all on him! Ten thousand loathsome venomous things were crawling on the floor and creeping up his limbs, as he vainly tried to dash them off.

"There—do you not see them—there—there," he would exclaim, pointing in affright to some viewless object. "Now they are on me—take them off—take them off—" and then he would sink down exhausted, the cold perspiration starting from every pore, and his whole frame trembling with the struggle. The picture is too painful, and we draw a veil over the closing scenes in the life of Alfred Vinton, who, before he had completed his twenty fourth year, died the wretched victim of unbridled and debasing vice.

CHAPTER V.

It was winter. The scene of anticipated comfort, of amusement and enjoyment to the rich, and the dreaded harbinger of want, of sorrow and suffering to the poor. A

deep snow had fallen, rendering the streets almost impassable, and then with that change so common to our climate, the sun shone brightly in the heavens, melting the white wreaths which lay upon the house-tops, and projected from the eaves. Again came change; the frost king held forth his sceptre, and the waters were stayed in their course. Onward glided his troops, hanging glittering spears from the eaves, and bristling the trees with polished lances.

A keen, nipping wind from the north was howling down the chimnies, and moaning through the keyholes, as the inmates of a comfortable room drew closer to the large coal fire that was burning in the grate.

"I'm glad you reached here yesterday, cousin," said a young and rather pretty-looking woman, who sat rocking a child to sleep. "I'm glad you reached here yesterday, for the wind is blowing a perfect hurricane, and I fear there will be bad travelling on the Sound to-night. How long it is since you were here before! nearly two years, is it not?"

"Yes, it is quite two years; and now perhaps I am here on a fruitless errand."

"Have you heard nothing to guide you in your search?"

"Not much, but I have resolved to make one more effort, and if I fail, will be constrained to regard the case as hopeless." A low knocking at the street-door drew the attention of the speakers.

"I'll go, Mary," said Mr. Edgar to his wife; "I wonder who can be coming here on such a bitter night?"

In a few moments Mr. Edgar re-entered the room. "For God's sake, Mary, get some warm clothing for that poor woman at the door, she is in a perishing condition, with an old faded thin calico dress, and a worn-out shawl

about her shoulders. I asked her repeatedly to come in, but she refused. Oh, what a night to be abroad looking for food!"

Mary hastened away, and as quickly returned to the hall where the woman was standing. A heavy woollen shawl was wrapped round the shivering creature, and a thick dress, together with some other useful articles, were given to her.

"God in heaven bless you for this," said a sweet, gentle voice; "think it not strange that I refuse to remain and partake of your hospitality, my child is hungry, and your husband has given me money to buy it food."

"Tell me where you live, and to-morrow I will go and see you." The stranger hesitated, then bursting into tears she said, "Hard and pressing want has driven me to this, it is the first time that I have begged."

"Oh, that is nothing," said Mary, soothingly, "that is nothing; neither you nor your child must want while so many have plenty. Will you let me come and see you?"

"Yes, yes, come! the voice of kindness sounds strangely to me—yes, come to———," and telling her where she lived the woman hastened away. Mary returned to the cheerful fireside with her heart saddened by the distress she had seen, and as she looked at her own child lying in its warm cradle, she thought of the poor woman hurrying to a cheerless home, with the food of charity to feed her little one. "Oh, God, make me truly thankful for thy blessings," was her inward ejaculation, "and give me more and more of that charity which freely feeds the hungry and clothes the naked."

"Poor thing," said Mr. Edgar, "how great must have been her destitution! I am afraid she has asked and been

refused before she reached here, for when she spoke it was timidly, like one who dreaded being repulsed."

"I hope she did not go next door, for Mrs. Crimpton makes it a rule never to give, thinking it wrong to encourage street beggars."

"It would be wrong," remarked Mary's cousin, "to encourage the idle or the profligate, but you can generally tell persons of such character, and surely that is a narrow heart which will refuse all, for fear of sometimes giving to the unworthy."

"Yes, it is indeed a cold, narrow-hearted policy. I would rather give a dozen times to the undeserving than run the risk of refusing one who was in want."

"And so would I," said Mr. Edgar, between whom and his wife there was a remarkable uniformity of opinion. "I never like to see anybody turned away without relief. We cannot, it is true, give largely, or devise great schemes for the benefit of the destitute, but if each individual who has the ability were willing to do something for the poor who come to his door, or who live in his neighborhood, the amount of suffering would be infinitely lessened. While we are selfishly debating about the worthiness or unworthiness of an object, a fellow-creature may be starving."

"How thin and feeble that poor woman looked who was here to-night! What a sin it would have been to have let her go empty-handed. To-morrow I must see what can be done for her."

"I wish I could go with you, Mary; sometimes I dread your going alone into strange places inhabited only by want and misery."

"Oh, you know I've grown quite a heroine. I must acknowledge that at first my heart beat somewhat quickly,

when venturing up an alley, or descending the decayed steps of some old cellar, or when clambering the dingy staircase to an out-of-the-way, queer-looking room in a garret. But I have never met with any mishap; on the contrary, I have always been received with the greatest kindness.

The next day Mrs. Edgar put up some delicacies in covered basket, and went in search of her visitor of the preceding night. The house was a long way off, and in a room scarcely containing an article of furniture, with a few small sticks burning on the hearth, sat a female picking the hair used for filling cushions and mattresses. In one corner stood a low bed on which a child lay sleeping. It was in truth the abode of poverty. A flush overspread the face of the female as she rose on the entrance of Mrs. Edgar, who in the broad day-light saw the ravages made by woe and want in a face of touching and child-like beauty. There was an embarrassing pause while Mary took a seat and placed her basket on the floor.

"How kind you are to come so far to see me. But for you, last night, my child might have perished. During the day I had not tasted food, the little bread I had was not enough to satisfy the hunger of my child, and we were both sinking from exhaustion; another such day and night and all would have been over."

"Oh, if we had only known that you were suffering here, we might have done something to assist you sooner; but your wants must be attended to immediately."

"I thank you, but to-day my task will be finished, and I shall be paid for it when it is done; yesterday I was too weak to work—and I was compelled to beg."

Mary learned from the destitute woman that she was a widow, that for a year after the death of her husband she

had comfortably supported herself and her infant; but a long sickness drained her resources, and left her with hardly strength to procure the necessaries of life. Few were willing to give employment to one who bore such indisputable marks of poverty, and it was only through the kindness of a neighbor, nearly as destitute as herself, that she procured the work which kept her from starving.

"You must not remain here," said Mrs. Edgar, "this room is damp and unwholesome."

The poor creature looked at her as if to say, "Where else can I go?" Mrs. Edgar understood the look and replied to it. "To-night I will speak with my husband, and to-morrow I will see you again. There is no doubt but better accommodation can be provided, and your health will be benefited by the change."

"God reward you for this unexpected kindness. Yesterday I almost despaired, and thought that my child and I would die here together—alone—perhaps in the dark night, without one friendly eye to watch, or one kind word to soothe. Oh, it was a fearful thought!"

"To-morrow," said Mrs. Edgar, turning away to hide her tears, "to-morrow I will be here."

CHAPTER VI.

"Now cousin," said Mary laughing, as she prepared to pay the promised visit, "I leave the baby in your hands. Rocking the cradle will be rather an awkward employment for a bachelor, but as Rosy sleeps all the evening, you will only have to put your foot on the rocker

occasionally—so—not too roughly mind—but softly—that will do, and it will not interfere with your reading in the least."

Street after street was crossed by Mr. Edgar and his wife, until they reached a thickly-populated neighborhood on the east side of the city.

"What a long walk you had yesterday, Mary; this is a part of the city I have seldom seen since, with my schoolmates, I went skating on Stuyvesant's pond. What a great change a few years have made! Here, where there was not long since swamp and meadow, are streets stretching down to the river, and filled with people."

"Yes, there is indeed a change, and there must be a great deal of destitution somewhere in this neighborhood. When I passed yesterday, I met so many poor women carrying small bundles of wood, and saw so many little pinched faces of half-clad children, that my heart ached, and I longed for part of the wealth of some of our millionaires to distribute among them."

"Not growing covetous, Mary, wishing for your neighbor's goods, eh?"

"I do not wish for more than I have, to apply to my own use, but I could lay out thousands for the benefit of the poor who are suffering from the inclemency of the season!"

"Have I not heard you say, that you would like a larger house, some new articles of furniture, and other things which we have not at present?"

"Yes; I confess to having said so, but I do not crave those things, nor would I hesitate a moment between giving the money for them, or bestowing it upon the poor."

"Why, Mary, I doubt not there are many who would call us poor!"

"We poor! with everything necessary for comfort or convenience, with health, with happiness, with something to spare for the needy, how can we be poor?"

"You are a dear, good wife, Mary, and few women would be so easily satisfied as you are. Mrs. Somebody's shawl, or dress, or bonnet, would be a subject of envy to many, and the poor husband would be teased for the finery when perhaps he could not afford it."

"Take care, Fred, don't praise me too highly; you know I am an admirer of pretty things, but very pretty things are generally very costly ones, and prudence whispers, 'That is too extravagant,' and then the words of a master-spirit come to my aid:

> 'For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich;
> And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
> So honor peereth in the meanest habit.'

Ah, here is the house for which we are looking; what a wretched place it is?"

On entering the room occupied by the thin, pale creature who had so excited their compassion, they found her seated near the fire, with her own child in her lap, and two other shy, half-starved looking little ones beside her. She was dividing among them part of the contents of the well-filled basket Mrs. Edgar had left the day before, and, as if caught in a wrong act, she started up, and attempted an apology for giving to others what had been left for the supply of her own necessities. The children drew back abashed and left the room.

"You did quite right," said Mr. Edgar, kindly, "I am only sorry that you had not more to spare them."

"We have come," said Mary, "to make some arrange-

ments, if you will permit us; Mr. Edgar thinks it would be better for you to go home with us, at present."

"Oh, I cannot, I have nothing wherewith to repay your kindness; in a few days I shall be stronger, and then I can resume my labor."

"That will never do; this place is uncomfortable, and your employment is unhealthy; nay, wait until you have heard me. I want some one, when I go out, to whose care I could trust my child, and then sometimes I have a great deal of sewing to do, and I am sure you could help me."

"But my child, I cannot part from my child!"

"Nor shall you; she is two years older than my Rosy, and will make a nice playfellow for her; don't you think so, dear?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Edgar, to whom his wife had appealed; "and I think, too, that both mother and child had better go with us to-night. We can wait," said he, turning to the pale and silent woman, who looked like one awaking from a dream, "we can wait until you are ready."

"You will not want any of these things," said Mrs. Edgar, as she glanced round the room, "and they may as well remain where they are."

"My neighbor, Mrs. Lambert, will be glad to take them."

"Then, by all means let her have them, and here is some money that she may buy wood; you told me she had been kind to you."

The furniture and money were given to Mrs. Lambert; and Mr. Edgar, taking the child in his arms, and followed by his wife and their intended guest, retraced his steps homeward.

A warm and cheerful room was theirs, and very pleas

ant and comfortable it looked to the sad stranger, as Mrs. Edgar, with her own friendly hands, untied the hood, and made her sit down in a softly-cushioned chair near the fire.

"And so you did not wake Rosy; well, you are an excellent nurse," said Mrs. Edgar to her cousin, who, from motives of delicacy, had averted his face when the stranger entered; "see, here is another little one, and you may take charge of her, while I go and see about supper."

The cousin turned to look at the child, his eyes met those of its mother; a sharp, shrill cry of pain broke from her lips, and she fainted. He was at her side in an instant. "Oh, most Merciful One!—Lizzy! Lizzy! Lizzy!" Alas, it was indeed Lizzy, and it was now Morris Wilson first saw her face since the night she had refused his hand!

CHAPTER VII.

Soon after her husband's death, Elizabeth Vinton found that nothing in the house where she lived was hers. Creditor after creditor came and claimed their share, till all was gone. She was alone, without a single earthly friend to whom she could look for assistance or advice. Two or three times had her husband, while living, taken letters from her to send to her parents, but no answer came; they must have cast her off forever. Should she go to them now? Would they receive her? Afraid and ashamed to make the trial, she sold whatever available articles belonged to her, and left Boston for New York, wishing for nothing but to hide her sorrow until death

came to her relief. But new duties called forth her energies, and when her little girl looked up and smiled, she shrunk from the thought of death, and prayed for life that she might be a protector to her child.

Elizabeth's only resource was her needle; but her health, already shattered by the sorrows through which she had passed, soon gave way under the close confinement to which she was subjected; and on her recovery from sickness she found herself sunk in the depths of poverty! Still she worked on, at whatever employment could be obtained, forgetting her own wants in her endeavor to supply those of her child. At last, when unable to complete her task, compelled by hunger, she wandered abroad in search of food, and after finding door after door shut against her by some pampered menial or heartless mistress, then, when ready to sink with exhaustion, she met with the kind, compassionate family of the Edgars.

"How providential it was that you came to our house," said Mrs. Edgar to Elizabeth, on the morning after the latter had met with Morris. "Only to think, how long he has been in search of you, and this was to be his last effort. What a happy circumstance that you came here!"

"And Morris told you that my parents never received my letters?"

"He did; and that your father had been in Boston seeking for you. The first time, the old man was rudely repulsed from Mrs. Vinton's, and on his second visit that lady had gone to Europe, and no one could or would tell him anything about her son. Once again he tried to find you, and some person informed him that your husband was dead, and that you had left Boston and gone no one knew whither."

"My dear father! and while he was seeking his unworthy child, she was fleeing from him, a prey to dark and sinful thoughts!"

"This is the third time my cousin has been in New York since your father despaired of ever seeing you again. Something led Morris to believe you were here, and I have known him to walk the streets for days together, looking at every female who at all resembled you. Poor fellow! how faithful-hearted he has been!"

A sudden expression of pain passing over the face of her guest, warned Mrs. Edgar to refrain from any farther mention of the subject.

"I will see Mr. Wilson to-day; last night it was impossible for me to speak to him. Oh, I have so much to ask—my father, my mother, my sister—and he says they are all well?"

"Yes, dear, they are all well, and their only desire is to have you with them once more; they would then be happy!"

"Ah, I have not deserved so great a kindness, I deserted them when I knew their hearts were bound up in me. But I have suffered, how deeply none save Heaven can ever know!"

Painful to both was the meeting between Morris Wilson and Elizabeth Vinton. The past came up before each with startling vividness. The night they had last met under the old porch, her refusal, his grief, all came back; and the remembrance to her was fraught with agony and shame—to him, with love, and sorrow, and regret.

"Can you be ready to go home next week, Mrs. Vinton? I will write to your parents and prepare them for your return."

"Go home! how strangely those words sound to one who has been so long without a home. Will they receive me, Mor——Mr. Wilson, are you sure they will?"

"Yes, yes, they will be but too glad to do so. You do not think they could forsake you, Lizzy!"

Morris spoke in his old, warm manner, and Elizabeth tried to believe that it would be as he said, but her own unworthiness rose up before her, and the dark shadow dimmed her joy.

In a few days, Morris received an answer to the letter he had sent Mr. Greene, and when Elizabeth read the old man's thanks to Heaven for the recovery of his child, and how impatiently they all wished for her return, she no longer hesitated, but taking an affectionate leave of her lately-found friends, went with Morris Wilson to her childhood's home.

Clasped to the breast of parents and sister, feeling their warm tears upon her brow and cheek, seeing her child fondled and caressed, Elizabeth could no longer doubt; ah, they loved her still! Like the prodigal, she had returned to her father's house, and had been met with blessings instead of reproaches—open arms to receive her—loving words to comfort her, the best of everything was hers. Again the dear name of Lizzy fell from familiar lips, and the formal Elizabeth, assumed at her ill-starred marriage, was forgotten, and with it was tacitly buried all allusion to the past.

Morris Wilson again became a visitor at farmer Greene's. He had always something to bring little Lizzy, and the child grew so fond of him, that she would watch for his coming, and run to meet him, that he might toss her in his arms, or dance her upon his knee. Her gleeful laugh,

her shining curls, her winning, mirthful ways, all reminded him of long ago. She was Lizzy's child—and as Morris pressed her closely to his heart, he knew he doubly loved her, for her mother's sake!

"And so Hetty and James Jansen are to be married, your mother tells me, Lizzy?"

"Yes; Hetty would not give her consent until I was found! How grateful we all are to you, Morris."

How those simple words thrilled the heart of Morris Wilson and overpowered him with memories of by-gone times! and how nervously and confusedly he whispered, "Grateful, Lizzy! can you never be more than grateful? Lizzy, dearest, speak to me—one word, Lizzy!"

They were sitting under the old porch, the moonlight came shimmering through the woodbine, and revealed to Morris that Lizzy was in tears.

"Oh, this is too painful, Morris! I hoped you had overcome your feelings of affection for me! I am but a blighted flower, Morris! Rude were the storms through which I passed, and the seeds of decay are *here*—nay, look not doubtingly, none know the languor, the exhaustion, against which I daily strive. Speak not again on this subject, Morris; it but adds an additional pang to a heart already sorely wounded. Once I asked you to be my friend; you will not deny me now, Morris?"

"I can deny you nothing, Lizzy, only speak not so mournfully; time, quiet, will restore you—you are too young to give up all hope!"

"Ah, not too young. If time is counted by suffering, what an age I have lived during the last five years! My dear parents, on them the blow will fall most heavily! and my child—O God! my darling child!"

"Will you trust her with me, Lizzy? I already love her as if she were my own!"

A pressure of Lizzy's wasted hand was the only answer, and as Morris looked earnestly upon her, he wondered that he had not sooner read in the pale, sad face, and mournful eyes, that the heart of the only woman he ever loved, was broken!

The bustle of preparation for Hetty's wedding, and the excitement attendant upon it, had died away. Quiet once more reigned at farmer Greene's. Ah, it was a fearful quiet!

In her own chamber, once so bright and sunny, lies Lizzy. The room is darkened, and over it hangs a stillness so deep that you can listen to the throbbing of the heart, and count its beating. The stifled sob, the agonizing groan of a man, breaks the unearthly gloom. It is Morris Wilson. He has stolen from the weeping friends below, and is kneeling beside Lizzy's coffin!

She withered like the flowers when the storm has crushed them; and the one error of her life, which brought with it sorrow, and shame, and suffering, was mournfully expiated!

The Seamstress.

CHAPTER I.

"CLARA, I wish you would assist me with this sewing; Miss Grey was not well yesterday, and I fear will not be able to come here to-day."

"And do you wish me to take her place, and turn seamstress? No, no, aunt Letty, I dislike sewing; plain sewing is horribly vulgar, and besides I've no time; after taking my Italian lesson I will finish one more row on my worsted netting, and then I must dress for a walk. I don't know why Mary Grey has those everlasting headaches; people who live by their needle should act differently; she knows ma' will be disappointed if she is not here, and I think she might have exerted herself a little to oblige ma'."

"You cannot be so unreasonable as to wish her to work when she is unable to do so."

"Unable! I believe half the time she is only putting on airs; and it is pa's fault, for he treats Mary as if she were an equal, instead of an old maid who is paid by the day for plain sewing!"

"Clara! Clara! I am grieved to hear you talk so unfeelingly. From your cradle you have been surrounded

by luxury, every wish has been gratified, and just in proportion as you have been removed above the toiling thousands around you, in just such proportion you have become pampered and selfish."

"I wish no lectures, aunt Letty. Your sympathy for the single sisterhood is not to be wondered at; old maids —pshaw!"

The young lady took her lesson, finished her row of netting, dressed herself with extreme care, and then went out to walk.

Clara's mother was out of town, and the duty of superintending the household concerns devolved wholly on aunt Letty. Indeed, this was no rare occurrence, for her sister-in-law, when in town, was obliged to receive and return so many visits, that—"Letty, will you give orders to cook this morning?—Letty, will you help Miss Grey with this sewing?—Letty, will you stay in the nursery until the baby goes to sleep, the little thing does not like nurse, and I am engaged for the evening?"—requests that had first been made in a gentle, insinuating manner, as if a favor would be granted if aunt Letty complied with them, were now equal to commands, when uttered by Mrs. Alexander Boardman to her husband's sister.

While thoughts of her own happy girlhood were thronging round her heart, aunt Letty felt that she was indeed an old maid, as with tears blinding her eyes she sat down alone to "stitch, stitch, stitch," for her brother's wife.

From the death of her aged mother, Letitia Boardman had resided with her only brother, a wealthy merchant. Affectionately attached to his sister, Mr. Boardman always wished her to act as if his house were her own, and, daily engaged in business, he knew not but his dear Letty

was happy as he desired she should be. Of the many services looked for as a matter of course by Mrs. Boardman, and exacted as a right from the "old maid" by Clara, he knew nothing, for his sister would not stoop to complain, nor did she wish to wound his feelings by showing him how matters really stood.

"Is not Miss Grey here to-day?" inquired Mr. Boardman of his sister, when they sat down to dinner, "I thought you told me she would remain for two weeks, Letty?"

"She was not well yesterday, and was obliged to go home, and I fear is no better to-day, or she would have been here."

"Poor thing," said Mr. Boardman, compassionately, "You must go and see her after dinner, Clara; perhaps she wants something that we can send her."

Clara looked up with a flushed face. "Go and see her; go and see Mary Grey, pa'?"

"Yes, that is what I said; you look surprised—what do you mean, Clara?"

"Nothing—but—I think Duncan might go instead of me."

"But I wish you to go, and not your maid."

"Well, pa', this is so strange? I don't know where Mary lives, and it is certainly more fitting that Duncan should visit our seamstress, than that I should go trudging into some out-of-the-way street to look after her."

Mr. Boardman gave one long, searching look at his daughter, and, without replying to her, he turned to his sister.

"Letty, dear, you will see Miss Grey this afternoon; if she requires medical advice let Dr. Walker go to her immediately. When I return in the evening we will consult

together how we may best benefit her without wounding her delicacy of feeling."

Pained by Clara's exhibition of unfeeling pride, Mr. Boardman found that he had committed a great error; he had left his daughter's education, and her moral training, wholly to her mother, and to teachers of her mother's selection, without pausing to think whether that mother was fitted for the holy duty entrusted to her. He resolved in future to watch more carefully the temper and the habits of his child, while he comforted himself with the thought that Clara was barely seventeen, and that it would be easy to uproot from her young heart the tares of pride and selfishness.

"Well, Letty, have you seen Miss Grey?'

"Yes, she was quite ill when I went there, and there was no one with her but her nephew. I sent him for the doctor, who administered some medicine, and when I came home I left Betty to stay with Miss Grey until to-morrow."

"You did quite right, quite right, dear sister, and now, if you will step into the store-room you will find some fresh fruit I ordered while you were out; select the finest and send it to Miss Grey."

As her aunt left the room, Clara curled her lip contemptuously, and wondered why her father took so much interest in the seamstress, the stiff old maid! Mr. Boardman saw the look, and with some severity he said: "Clara, I am surprised at the manner in which you conduct yourself when Miss Grey is spoken of, and I wonder that you have so little consideration for the feelings of others, I might say, so little good breeding, as to speak of unmarried women by the sneering title of 'old maids,' in the presence of your aunt Letty."

"Oh, pa', I can't bear them. They are all so queer and fidgetty, and they dress so oddly, their clothes are never in the present fashion, but look as if made ten years ago at least. What a fright Miss Grey is sometimes, with her old-fashioned white cambric gown, and her hair frizzed, and that everlasting gold locket, and her stately manner, as if she fancied herself some grand lady, instead of what she is, a mere sewing woman, hired at so much a day."

"Your prejudices are unreasonable, Clara; there are quite as many married women who are 'queer and fidgetty,' as you term it, quite as many who 'dress oddly,' as there are of women who remain single. The mere fact of her being married, is certainly no proof of a woman's superiority over those of her sex who do not enter into the marriage state, for it is as undeniable that many common-place, silly women, have husbands, as that many richly-gifted, estimable women, have none. If we could look into the past history of those whom you call 'old maids,' what lessons of self-sacrifice might we not read there. The heart of one lies in the grave of the betrothed of her youth—that of another gave its all of love to one unworthy of the gift—another still, has laid the fondest wishes of her life upon the altar of duty."

"Oh, pa', you find excuses for them because aunt Letty is one; but they are all disagreeable, I don't believe one of them ever had an offer."

Mr. Boardman was vexed at the flippant tone of his daughter. He had been proud of her personal appearance, proud of her graceful manner, proud of her accomplishments, without knowing whether the cultivation of her mind kept pace with those outward adornments.

"Clara," said he, "I have a story to tell you, which may

serve to make you less unjust in your opinions; come and sit beside me. You know the beautiful house that you have admired so often, and that I promised I would tell you all about some day or other."

"Yes, yes, I know—Mrs. Dashington lives in it now."

"That house was once owned by a gentleman possessing a large capital, and having business transactions with many of the most influential houses abroad. His numerous vessels traded to foreign parts, bringing him profitable returns on their various cargoes, and he was, in the fullest sense of the term, a prosperous man. His family consisted of a wife, and two daughters. The sisters had in all respects equally shared the love of their parents. They were both beautiful, both highly accomplished, but their characters and dispositions were as opposite as their persons. The elder of the two was fair and delicate, rather *petite*, and of mild and gentle manners,

'A violet by a mossy stone,
Half hidden from the eye.'

"The younger was of a proud and commanding figure. Her rich tresses were folded smoothly on her forehead, and gathered in a low knot on her beautifully-formed head, while her dark eyes flashed with the light of a haughty and unsubdued spirit. They were surrounded by all the elegancies of life, caressed by a large circle of gay friends, and sought in marriage by many who knew they were to inherit large fortunes.

"Among the occasional visitors at the hospitable house of the merchant, was a young clergyman, who had charge of a country parish, with the *enviable* salary of five hundred dollars a year. A man of polished manners and refined

mind, he found much that was congenial in the society of the merchant's elder daughter, nor could he help observing that she regarded him with kindness. But he never dreamed that she could be his wife, and when he found that love had stolen into the place of friendship, he absented himself from the house, and strove, in the strict discharge of his duties, to conquer a passion that to him appeared hopeless.

" The last man to whom the merchant would have given his younger daughter, was the very one she had chosen for a husband, and no entreaties of her parents could induce her to pause ere she gave her final decision. With the same obstinacy which had always appeared when her pleasure or her will were to be gratified, Adelaide assured her parents that she would never marry any other than Vincent Barckley. Fearing that his daughter might be married clandestinely, the merchant unwillingly gave his consent to the union.

" So long as Mary hoped to influence her sister, and deter her from committing an act which she feared would bring sorrow and anguish to their happy home, so long did she plead and entreat Adelaide to wait one year before she wedded. But when Mary found her sister's resolution was not to be shaken, then in her own loving hopeful manner did she strive to smooth all difficulties, and endeavor to persuade her parents and herself that Vincent Barckley might be a better man than the world thought he was. Mary could not deny that there was a charm and elegance in his manner well calculated to fascinate a gay and thoughtless girl; but to her it seemed false and hollow; there was no heart-warmth, none of that open manliness of character which wins upon a nature frank and confiding

as its own. She had never liked him from the first. There was that involuntary repulsion, for which she could not account, and which it was impossible to overcome. She strove to reason on the subject, but feeling was stronger than reason. She blamed herself for being prejudiced and uncharitable, and now that Barckley was the affianced of her sister, Mary tried more than ever to get rid of her distrust.

"The wedding was what is called a 'brilliant affair.' By the guests, Mr. and Mrs. Barckley were declared to be formed for each other, and, judging from outward appearances, there seemed to be nothing wanting to complete their happiness. Soon after their marriage, Adelaide and her husband went abroad, and passed their first winter together in the giddy vortex of Parisian gaiety.

"The admiration excited by her grace and beauty, where there were so many graceful and beautiful women to contest the palm, gave a still greater impetus to her vanity, and the richest dresses, and most costly ornaments, were ordered without any regard to outlay, that she might retain the epithet of 'queenly,' bestowed upon her by her admirers.

"She enjoyed but little of her husband's society, as it would have been in shocking bad taste for a husband to be found, in a fashionable circle, paying any little civilities or attentions to his wife, and so she was frequently left to the charge of Monsieur De L'Orme. Mr. Barckley was, of course, at liberty to lavish his smiles and his politeness on any lady who, for the moment, he thought the most agreeable, and in one successive round of amusements was spent the first winter in Paris.

"In the spring, Adelaide wrote to her parents that her husband and herself had decided on staying abroad another

year. They were to spend the summer months at Baden, and would return in winter to the French capital. The letter closed with a request for a large remittance, as Mr. Barckley had been disappointed in receiving the money he expected from his agent at home. The remittance was sent, and her father wrote kindly, yet firmly, of the necessity there was for prudence and economy. The only remark made by Adelaide, as she put down her father's letter, was, 'Economy! what a vulgar word, it is tantamount to parsimony!' Once more in the gay circle of her admirers, Adelaide strove to forget the many unpleasant scenes with her husband, which had occurred during their late tour, when they had been obliged, in travelling, to spend not only hours but days together. Too proud to let the world suspect she was unhappy, no voice was more cheerful than hers, and no smile was brighter, as she returned the salutations that greeted her re-appearance. She had married Vincent Barckley wilfully, and what had been his great attraction? She blushed as her heart answered the question. The attraction had been, not his gifted intellect, not his moral worth; but his fine person, and his graceful manners.

"Alas, alas, how beauty of person becomes positive deformity, when it is found to be but the covering for a corrupt mind. Admiration of the beautiful, love for it in every variety in which it is presented to us, seems to be an innate feeling of our nature. We gaze on a lovely picture, or a noble statue, with emotions akin to reverence; and when we look admiringly on the living beauty of one made in the likeness of God, how are we shocked to discover that the beauty is that of Lucifer, fair as the morning without, and dark as the midnight within.

"Although Adelaide was too proud to betray her unhappiness to the world, the world is generally clear-sighted enough in discovering faults, follies, and misfortunes, and equally loud-mouthed in noising them abroad.

"Nor was there wanting matter for the tongue of scandal, when it was known that Mr. Barckley had eloped with the wife of a young officer who had been his most intimate friend, and who had frequently loaned him money to pay his debts of *honor* at Frescati's.

"Adelaide was humbled. She had been wounded, not in her affections, but in her pride. Her haughty spirit would have borne much could it have been concealed; but that her friends should see another preferred by her husband to herself, that they should know she had no power over his heart, this was indeed humiliating!

"And what would be said at home? How could she who had left it an envied bride return a deserted wife! And how could she remain abroad without the means of living as she had done hitherto? In the last letters from her sister, Mary had plainly spoken of embarrassment in her father's affairs, and begged her to be more prudent.

"In this state of suffering, and while uncertain how to act, Adelaide was forced to listen to words of condolence from women who had envied her superior attractions, and who were secretly glad of her misfortunes.

"From De L'Orme she met with the kindest sympathy. His manner toward her was gentle, and reserved, as it fearful of wounding her delicacy by obtruding himself upon her notice. Her every look was studied, her every wish anticipated, and feeling the need of some friend on whom she might rely, she was grateful to him for his kindness.

"In less than a month after being deserted by her hus-

band, another letter from home told of the dangerous illness of her mother, and that her father was on the eve of bankruptcy. The shock was great.

" De L'Orme was with her when she received the letter, and her agitation on reading it was too great to be concealed. In a subdued and earnest tone he begged to know the cause of her distress. Was he not her friend? Was he not entitled to her confidence? Glad of sympathy, and regarding him as a man of true honor, she told him the state of her father's affairs, and her own perplexity. De L'Orme listened with deep and quiet attention, and when Adelaide paused, he sat silent for some minutes, without offering either condolence or advice. Then, suddenly, as if waking from a reverie, he said in an agitated tone, while he took her hand and pressed it softly in his own, 'My dear Mrs. Barckley, will you confide in me?'

"'There is no one else in whom I can confide. O, De L'Orme, among all the hollow smiles that day after day are given me, all the hollow professions to which I listen from those who triumph in my misery, how thankful is my poor heart that in this strange land I have still one friend.'

"'Adelaide, dearest,' said De L'Orme, passionately, 'you have spoken truly—you have one friend—a friend who loves you — who has long loved you — who will protect you while he has life—shall it not be so, my Adelaide?'

" Starting as if stung by a serpent, Adelaide sprang from her seat, and was about to leave the room without speaking. Misinterpreting her silence, De L'Orme followed and endeavored to detain her.

"'Touch me not, De L'Orme,' said Adelaide, with

quivering lip, while neck, cheek, brow, were crimsoned with shame and indignation, 'touch me not, my confidence has been misplaced; but from *you*, De L'Orme, from *you*, should not have come this added humiliation.'

"'Listen to me, Adelaide. Your husband has left you alone and unprotected, he has broken the vows that made you his, and you are free. I will be to you—'

"The unhappy woman turned on him a look of proud and stern reproach, yet so mournful withal, that De L'Orme's eyes fell beneath her gaze, and he was too much confused to proceed.

"When he looked up she was gone. In her own chamber all Adelaide's assumed composure vanished. She threw herself on a couch and gave way to an agony of tears. Her pride had hitherto supported her. Through all her misfortunes none had dared by word, or look, to treat her with undue familiarity, and now the only one in whom she had confided, was the first to make her feel how utterly defenceless and humiliating was her present position. Anything else she might have borne, rather than return alone to the home she had left so proudly, almost triumphantly. De L'Orme wrote repeatedly, but his letters were returned unopened, and with all speed Adelaide prepared to leave Paris. Her maid accompanied her to Havre, and was there dismissed; and alone and unattended, Adelaide embarked on board the packet. The weather was stormy, the voyage long and wearisome, and her health began to give way. Oh, how the stricken one longed for home! When she had landed and procured a carriage, she gave the driver her father's address, and in a state of nervous anxiety threw herself back in the seat, and tried to think how it would look at home.

"The day was drawing to a close, and the streets were thronged with multitudes all hurrying homeward. The laborer, with his weary frame and toil-stained garments, and the successful money-maker, with his self-satisfied bearing and fine apparel, were jostling each other in their eager haste. Their object was the same—to reach their home—how widely different!

"With a beating heart Adelaide ascended the steps of her father's house. It had a strange, deserted look. There were no lights in the drawing-room, and the servant who opened the door was not old Hector, who had been in the family since her childhood. She was passing through the hall without speaking, when the servant asked 'who she wished to see?'

"'Miss G——,' replied Adelaide, 'is she not at home?'

"'She does not live here, madam.'

"'Not live here! this is Mr. G——'s residence, is it not?'

"The servant hesitated a moment, and then answered, 'It was, madam, but Mr. G—— moved away two weeks ago.'

"Adelaide was stunned, and leaned against the wall for support.

"'Can you tell me where he has removed to?'

"The man gave her the direction, and with sad forebodings Adelaide turned from the home of her happy years. She could scarcely believe that the humble-looking tenement to which she had been directed could be the shelter of her parents and her sister. Parents! alas, she had but one. A week before her arrival her mother had died, even while praying that she might be spared to see her child. The shock of meeting her family under such al-

tered circumstances preyed upon Adelaide's already enfeebled frame, and in four months after her return she was laid beside her mother, leaving an infant of two weeks old to the care of her sister.

"From the moment that misfortune overtook the once prosperous merchant, Herman Hope, the young clergyman to whom I have alluded, was a constant visitor when in the city. It was he who stood by the bedside of Adelaide's mother, when death released her from her sorrows, and it was his voice which repeated at the grave the blessed words, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' It was he who poured the baptismal water on the brow of Adelaide's child, and, in her conflict with the King of Terrors, administered the consolations of religion to Adelaide herself. It was he who whispered comfort and resignation to the sadly-stricken survivors, showing them that the 'Lord loveth whom he chasteneth,' and that 'those outward afflictions which are but for a moment, worketh for us an exceeding weight of glory.'

"Herman Hope was the last of a family who had one by one passed away, with a beaming of the eye and a burning of the cheek which was beautiful to the last. Often had Mary trembled as the azure veins in his forehead grew more transparent, and the bright flush came and went more rapidly; but Herman, buoyed by the hope of calling her his wife, gave no heed to the disease stealing stealthily upon him. The knowledge came too soon. The physician told them his only hope for Herman's recovery was in a winter's residence at Santa Cruz.

"Poor Mary! how many a wakeful, tearful night, she spent in preparing the many little things a woman's love deems necessary for the comfort of an invalid. She could

not go with him, and smooth his pillow, and day by day watch beside him, speaking tender words of love and hope. Her father, and her sister's helpless infant, claimed her care; and commending her betrothed to the protection of Him who watches over all his creatures, she turned to her home duties with a feeling of loneliness greater than she had ever known before.

"Mary received a letter from her lover soon after his arrival. It was written in that glad and buoyant tone which always marks the renewed health of one who has been suffering from illness, and who feels the life-current once more flowing warmly through his veins.

"And now Mary's step grew lighter, and her heart-pulse beat quicker, as she played with the child, or administered some gentle restorative to her parent. It was time that she should receive another letter, but when none came, she thought it was because Herman wished to surprise her with his presence, and daily did she picture their happiness when he should again be at her side. Nestle a little longer, thou bright-winged angel of hope, nestle a little longer in the maiden's heart! A little longer let her dream, for hers will be a fearful waking! The beloved—the betrothed—has passed away to the Silent Land, and she sat not by him when the dark angel veiled his eyes in shadow—she kissed not his last breath, when the bright angel bore his soul to bliss. A lock of hair! a ring! and these are all that is left! Precious mementos of the dead, to be laid aside sacredly, to be wept over in secret, to be kissed by the lips, to be pressed to the heart until the hand can no longer clasp its treasures! Of Mary's sorrows I may not speak. It would be profanation. A wife bereaved of her husband, has no need to hide her grief. But a

maiden bereaved of her betrothed, must fold the agony in her own heart; maidenly delicacy prompts her to hide all sign of sorrow, and only in solitude can her pent-up feelings have vent in tears.

"Notwithstanding Mary's strict economy, the little that had been spared her father by his creditors was nearly spent, and the time she could steal from attendance on him, and the child, was given to her needle.

"Many a beautifully embroidered fabric was admired by her former associates, without their being aware that to the merchant's daughter was due the praise so freely given.

"A few years more, and Mary was left alone with the child. She still toiled on, though, owing to the failure of her eye-sight, she had ceased to embroider, and was obliged to resort to plain sewing to earn a subsistence. Some of her former friends wished to aid her, but she gently refused their kindness, and for fourteen years she has maintained herself and the orphan boy."

Mr. Boardman paused, and Clara eagerly asked, "Where is she now, papa? What is her name? How I should like to see such a woman! And she never got married? What a pity!" (Clara seemed to think that woman's only mission was the mission matrimonial.) "Well, I should like to see her, though. Do you know where she lives, papa?"

"Yes, and if you had gone where I requested you to yesterday, you would have known too."

"Why pa', it can't be—no, no, it can't be Miss Grey!"

"Yes, Clara, it is Miss Grey of whom I have been speaking, one of the most amiable, suffering, self-sacrificing women I have ever known. Miss Grey, cradled like your-

self in luxury, and now your mother's 'sewing-woman, hired at so much a day'!"

Clara blushed with shame, and her father proceeded.

"It is a long story I have told you, my daughter, but my feelings were too much interested to allow of my shortening its details. There is a brief tale connected with it which I will also relate to you.

"You remember that I said Mr. Grey had many vessels trading to foreign ports. The mate of one of these vessels was often at the office of the merchant, and sometimes at his house, on business, where he was always received with kindness. Frequently, at dusk, he met a very pretty girl leaving the house, who, he ascertained, did the plain sewing of the family. One evening they chanced to leave the house at the same time, and the mate walked by the young girl's side, and by degrees entered into a conversation with her, which was only interrupted by her stopping before her own door, and thanking him for his civility. He still lingered without bidding her good night, and with some little hesitation she invited him to enter.

"He did so gladly. After one or two more voyages she became his wife. His captain died, and through the kindness of the owner he was promoted to the command of a fine ship. In time he became owner himself of part of her cargo. Fortune smiled upon him, all his investments were profitable, and in a few years he no longer went to sea, but took his place among the wealthiest merchants of the city.

"His wife was a handsome, fashionable woman, and his eldest daughter was in many respects like her mother. The father was fond of his daughter, too fond to see her faults. He did not know how deeply the hateful weed of

pride had taken root in her heart, until he heard her speak contemptuously of the class to which her mother had belonged, until he heard her refuse to visit one to whose father her own owed all his prosperity."

"Oh, pa'," exclaimed Clara, her face crimsoned with mortification, "oh, pa', it can't be!"

"Yes, Clara, it was from the door of Miss Grey's once elegant home, that your father first walked with the SEAMSTRESS."

The First Step.

CHAPTER I.

OF all the woe, and want, and wretchedness, which awaken our compassion; of all the scenes of misery which call so loudly for sympathy; there is none that so harrows up the feelings as the drunkard's home! Look at him who began life with the love of friends, the admiration of society, the prospect of extensive usefulness; look at him in after years, when he has learned to love the draught, which, we shudder while we say it, reduces him to the level of the brute. Where is now his usefulness? where the admiration, where the love, that once were his? Love! none but the love of a wife, or a child, can cling to him in his degradation. Look at the woman, who, when she repeated "for better for worse," would have shrunk with terror had the faintest shadow of the "worse" fallen upon her young heart. Is that she who on her bridal day was adorned with such neatness and taste? Ah me, what a sad change! And the children, for whom he thanked God, at their birth; the little ones of whom he had been so proud, whom he had dandled on his knee, and taught to lisp the endearing name of father—see them trembling before him, and endeavoring to escape his violence.

Oh God, have pity upon the drunkard's home! Who that looks upon it but would fearingly turn aside from the first step to ruin?

James Boynton was the first-born of his parents, and a proud and happy mother was Mrs. Boynton, when her friends gathered around her to look at her pretty babe. Carefully was he tended, and all his infantile winning ways were treasured as so many proofs of his powers of endearment.

In wisdom has the Almighty hidden the deep secrets of futurity from mortal ken. When the mother first folds her infant to her heart, could she look through the long vista of years, and see the suffering, the sin, the shame, which may be the portion of her child, would she not ask God in mercy to take the infant to himself? Would she not unrepiningly, nay, thankfully bear all the agony of seeing her little one, with straightened limbs, and folded hands, and shrouded form, carried from her bosom to its baby-grave? And yet, not one of all the thousands who are steeped in wickedness and crime, but a mother's heart has gladdened when the soft eye first looked into hers, and the soft cheek first nestled on her own. And, still more awful thought! not one of all these Pariahs of society but has an immortal soul, to save which, the Son of God left his glory, and agonized upon the cross!

James grew up a warm-hearted boy, and among his young companions he was a universal favorite. "Jim Boynton is too good-natured to refuse doing anything we ask," said Ned Granger one day to a school-fellow who feared that James would not join a party of rather doubtful character, which was forming for what they called a frolic. And this was the truth. Here lay the secret of

Boynton's weakness—he was too good-natured; for this very desirable and truly amiable quality, unless united with firmness of character, is often productive of evil. But we pass over his boyish life, and look at him in early manhood.

He has a fine figure, with a handsome, intelligent countenance, and his manners have received their tone and polish from a free intercourse in refined circles. He passed his college examination with credit to himself; but, from sheer indecision of character, hesitated in choosing a profession. At this time, an uncle, who resided at the South, was about retiring from mercantile life, and he proposed that James should enter with him as a junior partner, while he would remain for a year or two to give his nephew the benefit of his experience. The business was a lucrative one, and the proposal was accepted.

James left his home at the North, and went to try his fortunes amid new scenes and new temptations. His uncle received him warmly, for the old man had no children of his own, and James was his god-child. His uncle's position in society, and his own frank and gentlemanly demeanor, won him ready access to the hospitality of Southern friends, and it was not long before he fell in love with a pretty orphan girl, whom he frequently met at the house of a common acquaintance. That the girl was portionless was no demerit in his uncle's eyes. Not all his treasures, and they were large, had choked the avenues to the old man's heart, and the young people were made happy by his approval of their union.

After a visit to his friends in the North, James returned with his bride; and in a modern house, furnished with every luxury, the happy pair began their wedded life. And

now, who so blest as Boynton? Three years pass away, and two children make their home still brighter. Does no one see the cloud, "not bigger than a man's hand," upon the verge of the moral horizon?

Boynton's dislike to saying "No," when asked to join a few male friends at dinner, or on a party of pleasure; his very good nature, which made him so desirable a companion, were the means of leading him in the steps to ruin.

"Come, Boynton, another glass."

"Excuse me, my dear fellow, I have really taken too much already."

"Nonsense! it's the parting glass, you must take it."

And Boynton, wanting in firmness of character, yielded to the voice of the tempter. Need we say, that, with indulgence, the love for the poison was strengthened?

For awhile the unfortunate man strove to keep up appearances. He was never seen during the day in a state of intoxication; and from a doze on the sofa in the evening, or a heavy lethargic sleep at night, he could awake to converse with his friends, or attend at his counting-room, without his secret habit being at all suspected.

But who that willingly dallies with temptation, can foretell the end? Who can "lay the flattering unction to his soul," that in a downward path he can stop when he pleases, and unharmed retrace his steps? Like the moth, circling nearer and still nearer to the flame, until the insect falls with scorched wing a victim to its own temerity, so will the pinions of the soul be left scathed and drooping.

Soon Boynton began to neglect his business, and he was secretly pointed out as a man of intemperate habits. At last he was shunned, shaken off, by the very men who had

led him astray. Who were most guilty? Let heaven judge.

Here let us pause, and ask why it is, that so many look upon a fellow-being verging to the brink of ruin, without speaking one persuasive word, or doing one kindly act, to win him back to virtue? Why it is, that, when fallen, he is thrust still farther down by taunting and contempt? Oh, such was not the spirit of Him who came "to seek and to save that which was lost." Such was not the spirit of Him who said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." How often, instead of throwing the mantle of charity over a brother's sin, instead of telling him his fault "between thee and him alone," is it bared to the light of day, trumpeted to a cold and censure-loving world, until the victim either sinks into gloomy despondency, and believes it hopeless for him to attempt amendment, or else stands forth in bold defiance, and rushes headlong to his ruin. Not one human being stands so perfect in his isolation, as to be wholly unmoved by contact with his fellows; what need, then, for the daily exercise of that god-like charity which "suffereth long and is kind," which "rejoiceth not in iniquity," which "beareth all things, believeth all things, *hopeth* all things, endureth all things."

Seven years have gone with their records to eternity:—where is James Boynton now?

In one room of a miserable, dilapidated tenement, inhabited by many unfortunate victims of poverty and vice, lives he who on his wedding-day had entered a home which taste and luxury rendered enviable. Squalor and discomfort are on every side. His four children are pale and sickly, from want of proper food, and close confinement in that deleterious atmosphere. They have learned to hide

away when they hear their father's footsteps, for, alas! to his own, he is no longer the *good-natured* man. Fallen in his own esteem, frequently the subject of ribald mirth, his passions have become inflamed, and he vents his ill-humor on his defenceless family. He no longer makes even a show of doing something for their support; and, to keep them from starving, his wife works wherever, and at whatever she can find employment.

A few more years, and where is Mrs. Boynton? Tremble, ye who set an example to your families of which ye cannot foretell the consequences! Tremble, ye whom God has made to be the protectors, the guides, the counsellors, of the women ye have vowed to love and cherish! Mrs. Boynton, like her husband, has fallen! In an evil hour, harassed by want, ill-used by her husband, she tasted the fatal cup. It produced temporary forgetfulness, from which she woke to a sense of shame and anguish. Ah, she had no mother, no sister, no woman-friend who truly cared for her, to warn, to plead, to admonish! Again was she tempted, again she tasted, and that squalid home was rendered tenfold more wretched, by the absence of all attempt at order. However great may be the sorrow and distress occasioned by a man's love for strong drink, it is not to be compared to the deep wretchedness produced by the same cause in woman; and it is matter for thankfulness, that so few men drag down their wives with them in their fall.

Providence raised up a friend who took the barefooted children of the Boyntons from being daily witnesses of the evil habits of their parents; and so dulled were all the finer feelings of his nature, that James Boynton parted from them without a struggle.

Like the Lacedemonians of old, who exposed the vice to render it hateful in the eyes of the beholders, we might give other and more harrowing scenes from real life; but let this one suffice. Thank God, for the change which public opinion has already wrought! Thank God, for the efforts which have been made to stay the moral pestilence! Oh, it is fearful to think how many homes have been made desolate—how many hearts have been broken—how many fine minds have been ruined—how many lofty intellects have been humbled! It is fearful to think of the madness —the crime—the awful death—which follow in the first Step to Ruin!

A Wife's Love.

"For better for worse."

"WHO was that pale, interesting-looking woman we saw in the church-yard this afternoon, Eleanor?"

"Do you mean the lady who led a little girl by the hand, and who bowed to us as we were passing?"

"The same."

"That was Mrs. Danvers, the English lady who lives in the pretty cottage, half embowered in clematis and honeysuckle, at the foot of the lane. As I have promised to make you acquainted with some particulars in her eventful history, we may not perhaps find a more fitting time than the present for their recital.

"About three years ago we heard that the cottage which had long been unoccupied was rented to a family who were strangers in the neighborhood, and whose manners and appearance betokened their belonging to that class of whom we usually speak as having seen better days. An air of neatness and taste was soon visible about the place—the little flower garden was assiduously cultivated, and the china roses which had been suffered to run wild, were pruned and trained against the parlor window. Often at twilight a low, sweet female voice was heard singing an evening hymn, or chanting one of the beautiful anthems of the Church of England.

"You know that during the whole of that summer the parsonage was vacant, and the service of the church performed occasionally by a clergyman from B——, who, although an excellent man, had no time to spare save for Sunday worship. Owing to this, Mr. Danvers and his amiable wife were left without that consolation from a beloved pastor which is always so grateful in hours of affliction.

"It is often cause for regret that in some instances so little intercourse is maintained between the clergyman and his people. They listen to his preaching on Sunday, go home and criticise his style and manner of delivery, and think no more about the speaker until the bell on the next Lord's day calls them to their accustomed seat in the sanctuary. I do not say this is the case with all: God forbid. The devout Christian goes from higher and holier motives than the mere sanction of custom, or the hope of hearing a fine specimen of pulpit eloquence; he knows that he is about entering, as it were, the presence-chamber of the Deity, and in the sublime services of the church his heart holds communion with the Majesty on high; to the sermon he listens as to the teaching of one of Christ's ambassadors, and, although he may be an ardent admirer of the graces of oratory, regards the matter of the discourse more than the manner of him who delivers it. Still, in a mixed multitude there are many who might be benefited, ay, benefited perhaps to the saving of their souls, by friendly words of encouragement or warning from their pastor in private. There is hardly one human heart so depraved as not to be won upon by kindness; and the kindness of a clergyman who has endeared himself to his people by a personal interest in their concerns, is, of all others, the most touching, while, in the regard entertained for him by

his flock, there is an union of affectionate love and filial reverence so harmoniously blended, as to form one of the most delightful emotions.

"There is something so holy, so sacred in religion, that it shuns observation, and retires within the innermost recesses of the heart. This is more particularly the case with the young, and yet how frequently do those who are about to engage in this world's warfare languish for want of spiritual intercourse! And there are moments too, in the lives of some,—moments of heart-crushing sorrow—moments of pain and agony of spirit,—when the mind is like to 'sweet bells jangled out of tune'; oh, what would not then be given for one hour's free, and familiar, and confiding communion with a dear servant of God's altar! But it may not be; heart-sorrow, like heart-piety, is unobtrusive, and cannot be poured into the ear of the clergyman, esteemed though he may be, who is hardly known to his people out of the pulpit. Pardon me this long digression; the subject is one which in former years was painfully brought home to me in more than one instance, and it has often occupied my thoughts.

"Some two years or more after Mr. Danvers came to reside at the cottage, Mr. Elwood was called to take charge of this parish, and it was on one of the loveliest days of autumn that we arrived at the parsonage. The evening was just closing in, and the glories of the 'sun's golden set' was falling on the many-colored leaves of the old trees around our dwelling; the river lay slumbering in the distance, unruffled as a mirror, and the soft breeze scarcely stirred the long branches of the willow that hung over the eastern doorway; all was beauty! beauty in repose! it was a scene worthy the pencil of a Claude. Never shall I

forget the holy calm which stole over my soul at that sweet hour, while I silently prayed that the labors of Ernest might be blessed, and that the close of both our lives might be serene and tranquil as the beautiful twilight of that autumn evening.

"The next day being Sunday there was no opportunity for more than a casual observation of those who attended church; but on Monday morning Mr. Elwood left home for the purpose of visiting his parishioners, and ascertaining if there were any among the poorer classes who needed assistance. It was not until his return in the afternoon that he called at the house of Mr. Danvers; the reception he met with was grateful to his heart, and enlisted his sympathies in favor of its inmates. I was so much interested by what he told me of the family, that at an early hour on the following day I knocked at the door of the cottage. It was opened by Mrs. Danvers, and on my introducing myself, I was shown into the little parlor whose rose-latticed window had been the object of my admiration; and as my eye strayed round the room, I saw that the hand of taste had been busy within those white-washed walls, and under that lowly ceiling. Mrs. Danvers said that her husband had been ill during the night, and had just fallen into a gentle slumber, from which she hoped he would wake refreshed and free from pain. The entrance of her little girl interrupted our conversation, and as the child whispered 'papa is awake,' I rose to depart; but Mrs. Danvers requested me to stay and see her husband. On accompanying her into the small chamber where, half raised in bed, supported by pillows, rested Mr. Danvers, I looked upon his face, and that one look was enough! the high, white forehead, from which had been thrown back the rich

clusters of chesnut hair, was damp and pallid, while the deep blue eye shone with unnatural brilliancy.

"It was from Mr. Danvers's own lips that Ernest at intervals, during frequent visits, heard his story. He was an only son, and had been heir to a large fortune; and while yet at college, he was a welcome visitor in the family of Mr. Travers, a friend of his father's. A slight and graceful figure, sunny ringlets falling round a face of girlish loveliness, manners at once timid and confiding, a highly-cultivated taste, and a mind filled with all pure and lofty thoughts, won for Emily Travers the heart of the young collegian.

"Their parents saw with pleasure the attachment of their children, and it was arranged that as soon as Charles had completed his college course, and made choice of a profession, they should be united. The time at length arrived, and Charles having chosen the study of the law, received the hand of his beautiful bride from her father at the altar.

"For awhile after his marriage, he followed with avidity the path he had marked out for himself; but his was not one of those minds which, for the purpose of attaining eminence, can concentrate its energies upon dry and abstruse subjects; his studies became irksome, and a renewal of acquaintance with some dissipated young men he had known at Eton, tended still more to alienate his mind from legal pursuits. Regard for his wife, whom he loved amid all his wanderings, kept him for a time from open excess; but the tyrant habit became too strong for his weak resolutions, and one night the talented and accomplished Charles Danvers was assisted by boon companions to his home. His wretched wife watched over him through that long night of misery, with her unconscious infant

cradled in her arms; and when the morning came, and her unhappy husband awoke to the humiliating sense of his degradation, she uttered no complaint, for she had spent the night in prayer to God to enable her to bear her husband's infirmities without irritating him by needless reproaches, and she trusted that He who was able and willing to save to the uttermost would yet bring back the wanderer. The meek forbearance of his wife powerfully affected Mr. Danvers, and he inwardly resolved that she should never again suffer through his misconduct; but alas! these resolves were made in his own strength, he had not yet learned that it was God's grace alone that could keep him from error. To the vice of intemperance was now joined a passion for gambling, and in a short time he was bankrupt.

"The father of Mrs. Danvers wished her to leave her husband, and return to the parental roof; mildly, yet firmly, she refused.

"'I vowed before God's altar to abide with him until death should part us. Through all changes I shall seek strength to keep my vow, for if his wife flee from him as from a polluted thing, who will watch over him in hours of sadness and remorse? who will administer consolation to his wounded spirit, and make him feel that he is still capable of loving, that he is still beloved? My father, I cannot leave him'—and for the first time Mr. Travers parted in anger from his daughter.

"By selling some articles of value which had been saved from the wreck of their fortune, Mrs. Danvers obtained a considerable sum, and prevailed on her husband to embark for America. The spirit of the haughty man was subdued, and he who should have been her supporter, her

protector, was now obliged to look to his fair and delicate wife for encouragement and advice.

"On their arrival here, they rented the cottage where they reside, and far removed from scenes of former temptations, the prayers of the devoted woman were answered, and she blessed God that he had spared her to see her beloved husband a follower of Jesus. Such was the story told to Mr. Elwood, and you may judge how great was the interest it caused us to take in the welfare of this suffering family.

"Mr. Danvers lingered through the winter, and when March, with its winds so fatal to invalids, had gone by, and he was able to sit by the parlor window reading from the Word of Life, the fond wife would hope that he might be spared a little longer.

"It was after an evening spent with them in conversing on the hopes and glories of immortality, during which Mrs. Danvers, at her husband's request, had read Keble's soothing and beautiful 'Burial of the Dead,' that Mr. Elwood and myself were sent for in great haste; Mr. Danvers was worse; it was thought he could not live till morning. When we entered the chamber where he lay, we were instantly struck with the change in his appearance, and knew that death was rapidly approaching. Mrs. Danvers rose from the bedside, where she had been kneeling, and pressed our hands in silence; her husband had wished Mr. Elwood to administer to him the sacrament of the Lord's Supper once more on earth, ere he should be called to sit down at the table of the Lamb.

"It was a solemn and a holy scene! there lay one who had erred, and who, clinging to the cross of Christ as the only refuge for sinners, had been forgiven; one who was about to enter on the realities of an eternal state, and to

behold things which St. Paul has declared are not lawful for a man to utter, and the sight of which, for upward of forty years, animated the zeal of the holy Apostle, and made him desire to 'depart and be with Christ, which was far better.' The 'fair linen cloth' was spread upon a small table near the half-opened window, through which the fragrance of spring flowers came wafted on the night air; the stillness of death was around, broken only by the voice and step of the pastor in the communion service.

> 'Sweet awful hour! the only sound
> One gentle footstep gliding round,
> Offering by turns, on Jesus' part,
> The Cross to every hand and heart.'

After all had partaken of the holy elements, Mr. Danvers, who had sunk exhausted on his pillow, suddenly rousing himself, blessed his wife and child, and commended his soul to God. Again all was hushed—and as Mr. Elwood knelt and offered up the solemn commendatory prayer for a sick person at the point of departure, while the first hues of dawn were brightening the horizon, the spirit departed to the full light of immortal day.

"It is now six months since, and the widowed mourner has borne her bereavement with a pious resignation to the Divine will. She has not sorrowed indeed as those who have no hope, for she feels that the grave is the gate to heaven, through which her husband has passed before her; and if her trials have been great, great also have been her consolations. Her trust was in One mighty to save, in One who has said, 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness.'"

Ease-loving Philanthropy.

CHAPTER I.

Poets, we take it for granted, are early risers. No downy couch can woo them, or, at least, can win them, when—

> "There's gold upon the mountain-brow,—
> There's light on forests, lakes, and meadows."

No dallying with the drowsy god—

> "—When rosy-fingered Morning faire,
> Weary of old Tithone's saffron bed,
> Has spread her purple robe through dewey aire;"

no—no; they at least (the poets we mean) are up with the lark—how else could they write such glowing and glorious descriptions as this:—

> "When the firmament quivers with daylight's young beam,
> And the woodlands, awaking, burst into a hymn,
> And the glow of the sky blazes back from the stream."

There, dear city reader, does not the blood tingle more warmly through your veins?—are not your pulses bounding with a quicker thrill?—do you not wish for wings, to flee away to the woodlands of your "own green forest land," and see—

"How Nature paints her colors—how the bee
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweet?"

And it is glorious to watch the first uplifting of Night's curtain from the morning sky—to see the lazy mists slowly creeping from the water's edge, and curling up the mountain side—the sun peering forth from "cloud-land, gorgeous land," and sending iris robed messengers abroad, to herald his joyous coming. One more quotation, dear reader—only one—from the many which Morning has spirited from the Past. Hear what he, who, like Chrysostom, was called the golden-mouthed,—hear what Jeremy Taylor says of early dawn:—

"But as when the sun approaches towards the gates of morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by-and-bye gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the brows of Moses when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and full light."

Heaven bless us, what a rhapsody! Not a word about heavy showers, that *might* damp enthusiasm—not a whisper of wet grass, and horrid snakes, and such like discomforts, that *will* sometimes tone down a morning picture. Well, even under such circumstances, a light heart can laugh, and a light foot can run, and the shower will pass, and the snake glide harmlessly under the old log, and then you can forth again to the ramble. A word here to lady readers. Never attempt a walk in the country before sunrise, unless provided with good thick-soled leather shoes, a strong gingham or calico dress that will bear coming in

contact with thorns—for, alas! the *rose*iest morning in the woods is filled with them—an ample sun-bonnet that you can fling off in the shady places, and let the freshening breeze steal kisses from your cheek till it outblush the dawn. Thus equipped, away through meadow and field. Don't be afraid to climb a *low* stone wall, if the wild columbine nods you a welcome from its woodland home; don't turn away from the stepping-stones of a tiny brook, if the starry-eyed forget-me-not whispers pleasant fancies from its stream-girt bower. Our truth for it, that after such a ramble, you return healthier, wiser, better, with more gratitude to God in your souls, more love for his creatures and his works swelling up within your hearts, and more charity for the failings of those who are journeying with you, and who may fall, you know not how soon,—

"Weary with the march of life."

Poets, we take it for granted, are early risers—in summer. But how is it in winter, when "the air bites shrewdly"? Has any one ever seen the phenomenon of a poet rising before daylight on a "bitter morning," when the ground was heaped with snow, and, pulling on a pair of seven-leagued boots, go forth on an exploring expedition into the woods? We question whether even Alfred Street, with all his nature-loving propensities, has ever accomplished such a feat. Strange stories, indeed, are told of wise and good men, who, if they did not from June to January outwatch the stars, did yet outrise the sun. But these are rare exceptions to the general rule, and Leonard Lento was not an exception. Now, we are not going to let you into the secret as to whether our hero prosed or rhymed: one of these was his vocation, and should you

be told which, you might take to fancying that this was a darkly-shadowed daguerreotype of some noted individual. Nor will we reveal whether he does or does not wear a slight moustache on the upper lip—that secret is safe, between him and the coverlet.

One thing, however, you must know, for it was on this that he plumed himself: he did not belong to the miserable tribe of common scribblers, whose brains are converted into spinning-jennies, to supply their bodily wants! No, thank heaven, he—Leonard Lento—was a gentleman author. Pray don't make the mistake of attaching any old-fashioned meanings to the comprehensive word gentleman; a word that, in its true and legitimate sense, embodies all that is honorable, noble, chivalrous, in manly character. Mr. Lento knew that he was rich, and thought, of course, he was a gentleman.

But in his writings he leaned to the side of the people, and was ever lamenting the wretched fate of the down-trodden masses, and shedding tears, of ink, over the sufferings of poor humanity. His was indeed the "luxury of wo," as he sat at night before the well-filled grate, in warm dressing-gown and furred slippers, writing a jeremiad on the privations of the poor. And his too was the "luxury of doing good," as he lay cozily on a winter morning, in his curtained bed, and pitied the shivering creatures who crept forth from cellar and garret, and, with bowed shoulders and shuffling gait, wended their way to the tread-mill of daily toil. Something must be done to better their condition—some mighty effort must be made to level upward; and his pen—the pen of Leonard Lento—should be the lever that would move the moral world. Some cold morning he would rise early, and go to and fro

through the streets of the great city, and look on what he had heard of, read of, written of; but had never seen! A certain naughty place, they say, is paved with good resolutions; and if so, many a quaint mosaic has been contributed by Leonard Lento.

Now, Leonard had a cousin. Well, you will say, and has not many a man a cousin? Yes; but Leonard's was a bright, warm-hearted girl, who, we must own, was a little tinged with romance; for, were it not so, how could she have made a hero out of ease-loving Cousin Leonard?

Lazy, dawdling, lie-abed-in-the-morning people, were Rose Brandon's aversion; but Cousin Leonard was not one of these, for—he had written a sonnet to Guido's Aurora! Rose Brandon's heart was overflowing with warm and genial charity; and many a dark and poverty-stricken fireside had been brightened by her presence on a stormy day. And was not Cousin Leonard a ministering angel to the children of want; for—had he not written an Essay on the Prevention of Pauperism? Rose Brandon's love was the out-gushing of an ardent soul, ready to make any sacrifice for the object of its affections, and Cousin Leonard would be an adoring lover: for—had he not written to prove the ecstasy of dying for the beloved?

Ah, Leonard was a sentimentalist—on paper! a philanthropist—on paper! a lover—on paper! and, by the aid of the above-mentioned romance, Rose transferred all lovable qualities from the paper to the man. It was a sad mistake, Rosy, dear; but one that has been made by older heads than yours. It was in vain that Aunt Prudence sought to undeceive Rose—in vain that Brother Frank laughed at lazy Cousin Leonard; for Cupid was busy weaving meshes over the maiden's eyes, thinking,

"pretty trickster," to succeed in making them blind as his own.

"Rose," said the mischievous boy, Frank—not Cupid—one winter morning, when he was buttoning his overcoat, "I wonder how Cousin Leonard would like to get up and join our skating party? How I should like to see him, though, just for once in the morning; what a sight it would be!"

"How silly you talk, Frank, Cousin Leonard devotes all his mornings to study."

"To study!" and Frank laughed, as young light-hearted boys will laugh, right merrily. "Why, Rosy, he must be studying the dots on the counterpane, or the figures on the curtain, for he never rises till eleven or twelve o'clock.

"Oh, Frank, how can you say so? Leonard knows the value of time too well to waste it in such a manner."

"Does he, though? Well, I'll bet—I'll bet a new sled Leonard don't get out of bed till the middle of the day in winter! Will you bet? Oh, there's Ned Morris! Good-by, Sis," and with another ringing laugh, Frank ran to join his companion.

"I wish Frank was not so wild," soliloquized his sister, after he had gone; "and I wish Aunt Prudence would not speak so unkindly of cousin. If I thought for a moment he were what they say he is, I would—yes, I am sure I would—*despise* him."

Winter wore on, and while Cousin Leonard, after extricating himself with difficulty from a mass of covering, wheeled a chair to the fire, and wrote pathetically of destitution, and transcendentally of relief, Cousin Rose might be seen wrapped in a heavy cloak, making her daily visits to the house of a poor widow who was suffering from ill-

ness, brought on by overtasking a feeble frame, in the endeavor to support herself and two small children.

"I shall be obliged to leave town for two or three weeks," said Rose, after she had made all comfortable for the invalid, one cold morning; "but my little Nelly here will, I am sure, prove a good nurse until my return"

The sick woman's heart sunk within her, for Rose's daily visit had been the only sunshine of her dreary home. It was not Rose's benefactions alone, but her soothing words, her cheerful, hopeful manner, that gave new life to the way-worn creature, who had no other earthly friend, and tears she could not repress started to her eyes, as she thought of weeks elapsing without the presence of her benefactress.

"I am very selfish, my dear young lady," sobbed poor Mrs. Brown, "but you have been very good to me, and I cannot bear the thought of being so long without seeing you. I can never be thankful enough for your kindness, and if the prayers of a poor creature like me can bring blessings, they will ever be offered up for you."

"There is a friend of mine," and Rose blushed as she spoke, "who is one of the most kind-hearted beings in the world; I will get him to call on you while I am absent, and if, at any time, you should require immediate attention, send for him; he will not delay coming to you."

"May God bless you, my dear young lady, and grant that I may see you again," said the widow, as she took the paper on which Rose had written the address of Leonard Lento.

That evening, Cousin Leonard was sitting beside Rose, in the warm, well-lighted parlor, and as a sudden gust of wind rather noisily closed an unfastened shutter: "Oh, it

is shocking to those who, like me, feel so keenly for the miseries of poor suffering humanity, (a favorite phrase this of Lento's,) it is shocking to think, on such a night as this,

> ——— 'Sore pierced by wintry winds,
> How many shrink into the sordid hut
> Of cheerless poverty!'

Oh, what mighty efforts should be made by true philanthropists to drive the curse of poverty from the land! Men should be taught to feel that they are brothers, and society be upheaved from its foundation, so that each may have an equal share in the good gifts which of right belong to all."

Now, this last proposition, about upheaving society, was not quite so clear to Rose as it seemed to be to Cousin Leonard; but then, as Leonard said, "his benevolence was large," and Rose was glad that, under its ample protection, she could place the widow Brown and her children. Telling the poor woman's story to Leonard, Rose added, that she had no hesitation in asking him to look in occasionally, and supply their wants while she was gone. Lento promised, and took his leave, and Rose lay half the night thinking of her generous, kind-hearted cousin.

* * * * * *

"Please, sir, I had to come back again, for my mother is very sick this morning, and she said I must try and see Mr. Lento."

"Off with you, you young torment; havn't I told you Mr. Lento isn't up yet? and I tell you now he's not likely to be for an hour or two to come."

The child crept away shivering with cold, and returned, for the second time, to tell her tale of disappointment to

her sick mother. Rose had now been absent for two weeks, and poor widow Brown was much worse, and suffering for want of the attentions that were to have been given by Mr. Lento. Too indolent to rise o' mornings, he had not seen the little girl; and too much taken up with visiting and talking over schemes of benevolence in the afternoon, Leonard had quite forgotten the widow and her children. Another week went by, and the pale, tearful little girl again implored the servant to let her see Mr. Lento. This time he was not at home, and the man told the child that his master would see her mother in the morning.

"Call me to-morrow at nine," said Leonard, when dismissing his servant at night; "one must make some sacrifice in the cause of poor suffering humanity."

In the morning, Leonard was awoke by the servant: "The clock has struck nine, sir."

"Very well, John, I'll be down presently."

When John left the room, his master slowly raised himself in bed, taking care, as he did so, to envelope himself in the covering, until but the upper part of his face was visible.

One stocking was half engulfed in the blankets, while the other lay so far down on the bed, that he would be obliged to uncover his arm to reach it; but he thought of poor suffering humanity, and determined on making the sacrifice.

Turning his eyes in the direction of the window, he saw, to his consternation, that it was snowing, and straightway fell to pitying the poor Irish lads who were obliged, by clearing the side-walks and crossings, to pick up a stray shilling.

"There ought to be some machine to save these half-frozen creatures from such employment during the cold weather. Now, if I could invent one, I might gain a medal from the well-to-do-in-the-world-labor-saving Society; stay —let me see—I think the thing might easily be done." Here Mr. Lento fell to thinking, or rather dreaming. and ten o'clock came and went, and he took another look at the window, and drew the warm covering still closer, and thought the day was bitter cold.

That very morning Rose had returned home, and her first thought was of the sick widow and her children. "No doubt Cousin Leonard has kept his promise," thought Rose, as she hastened on through the snow. "How pleasant it will be for poor Mrs. Brown to have a cheerful fire this gloomy morning, and how it has gladdened his benevolent heart to send those little delicacies which are so gratefully received by the sick; perhaps he is there now, kind cousin!"

As Rose approached the house, she looked up at the little window, expecting to see her favorite Nelly, but no glad young face welcomed her return. With a subdued feeling she ascended the creaking stairs; a low sobbing reached her ear, and as she stopped to listen, the door of the widow's room was opened, and a poor-looking woman came out, holding Mrs. Brown's youngest child by the hand, and followed by little Nelly. When the latter saw Rose her suppressed grief burst forth.

"Oh, Miss Brandon, mother's dead! mother's dead!" Rose was shocked. In the cold, gloomy room lay all that was mortal of the poor widow. The cupboard was open, and on one of the shelves lay a few crusts of dry bread. Some half-burnt shavings were scattered on the hearth

And this was all—on this wintry morning, these were all the comforts within reach of the dying woman!

'Oh change! Oh wondrous change!
Burst are the prison bars;
This moment there, so low,
So agonized, and now
Beyond the stars!'

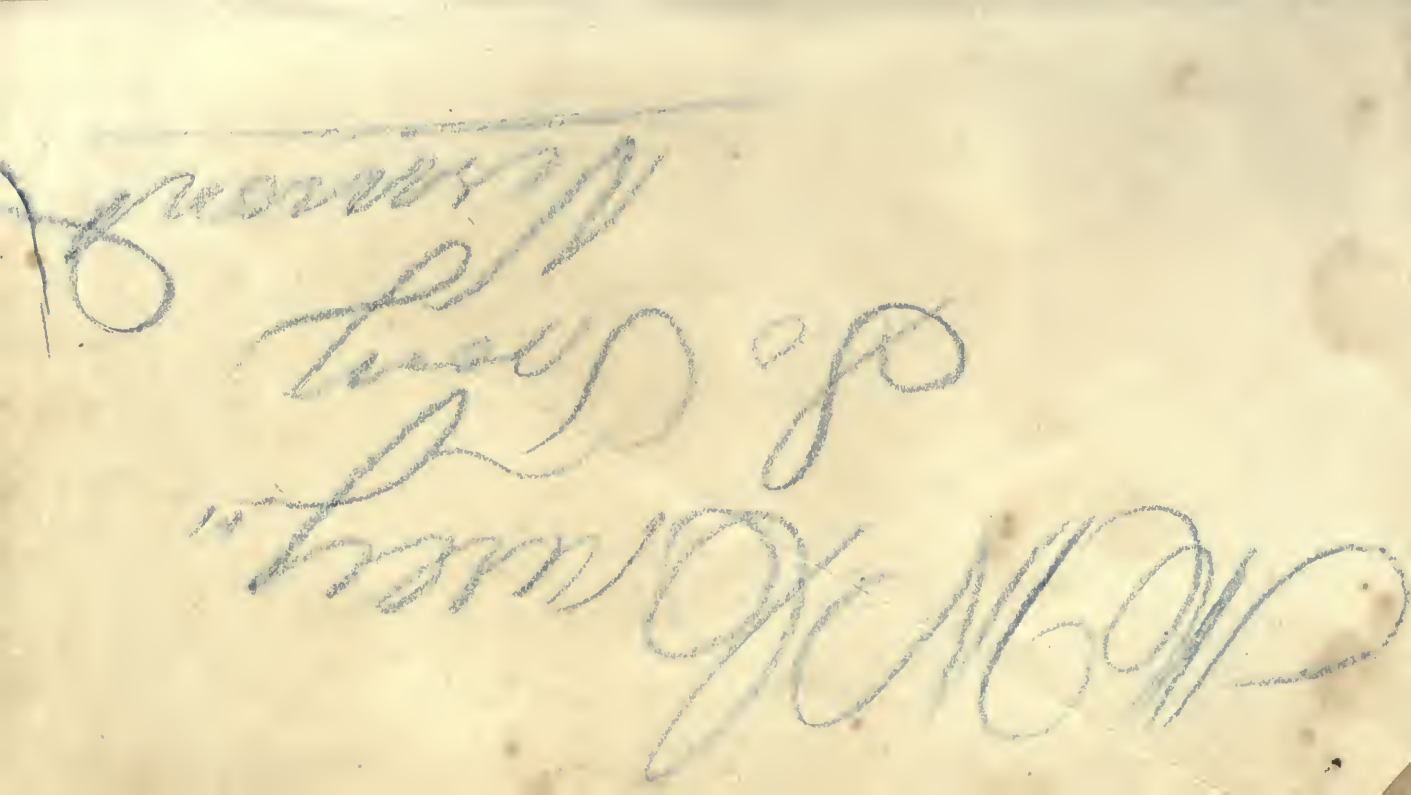
"Oh, Nelly," said Rose, as she held the hand of the weeping child, "why did you not go to the gentleman I told you of? why did you not ask Mr. Lento to come and see your mother?"

"I did, Miss Brandon; I did go ever so many times, but the man told me I couldn't see Mr. Lento, for he wasn't up yet, and it was eleven o'clock too before I went. And he promised to come this morning, but he didn't; and then Miss Smith ran all the way there, and he was in bed yet; and oh, Miss Brandon, I told the man last night that mother was dying."

After all, aunt Prudence and brother Frank were right.

"And he could do this," thought Rose, "he who was ever writing and talking of making sacrifices in the cause of poor suffering humanity; he could slothfully draw the covering of his curtained bed on such a day as this, when he knew his aid was wanted—when he knew, too, it was wanted for a sorrow-crushed, poverty-stricken woman who was dying! Out upon such false philanthropy! Thank Heaven, I have learned, ere too late, the sluggish, selfish heartlessness of Leonard Lento!"

THE END.



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